Saints and Sages of Kashmir

T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

Kashmir Valley is known by many names. One of the names given to it is '*Resh Vaer*' or a Garden of the Sages. True to this name this holy land has produced a galaxy of saints, savants and sages. Some of them professed Buddhist faith, some advocated Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy, some belonged to Sufi order, some were saint-poets and some were clairvoyants. This volume is an attempt to give a glimpse of this rich tradition of saints by giving an account of the life and teaching of some selected sages. Care has been taken to give representation to every type of these holy persons so that every shade of sainthood is described with authentic details. The common message of these sages to try and raise ourselves from animality to divinity has been highlighted in the papers included in this compilation.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian sub-continent has a rich tradition of saints and sages. The oldest known literature, the Vedas were perceived by the great sages. Commentaries and treatises were written by eminent saints. '*Gurukula*' tradition originated and veered around sages. The six important schools of Philosophy are the creation of the fertile mind of various seers. Most Brahminical clans called *'Gotras'* have renowned sages as their source, like Bhardwaja, Vasishta, Bhargava, Dattatreya etc. In more recent times a wave of devotional movement flourished that produced a galaxy of saints from Guru Nanak Dev ji in the Punjab to Chaitanya Maha Prabhu in Bengal, from Meera Bai in Rajasthan to Sant Tuka Ram in Maharashtra and Alvars and Nainars in the South, From Tulsi in the North to Kambhan in the South, both of whom wrote the story of Rama in their own unique ways.

Kashmir has been no exception. The valley itself was founded and established by a great sage, Kashyapa, with whose efforts the water of the 'Sati Sar' was got drained to make it habitable. He recognized the sacredness of the land and designed it to be the abode of saints and sages for penance and spiritual pursuit. Before the advent of Islam we had saints of both the faiths of Sanatana Dharma and Buddhism there. Notable among the Buddhist saints were Kumarajiva, Sanghabhuti, Gautama Sanghadeva, Punyatrata, Vimalaksa, Dharmamitra and others. In the eighth century a distinct philosophy called Kashmir Shaiva Darshan was re-established and propounded by the sage Vasugupta and erudite scholar-saints like Somanand, Utpal Dev, Bhatta Kallata and Abhinav Gupta followed. With the advent of Islam in fourteenth century a number of Sufis came to Kashmir. They were highly influenced by the prevalent faith and tradition of Kashmir. The result was that a number of Hindu and Muslim saints were produced by this holy land and a pious 'Rishi' cult developed that fashioned the lives of the inhabitants and made them inclined towards peace, piety, purity and brotherhood. It is because of this that Kashmir is also called *'Reshi-vaer '* or the garden of the sages.

We had the great Yogini, Lal Ded and the great Rishi, Nunda Rishi, who were both revered by Hindus and Muslims alike. Then came on the horizon an incarnation of the Divine in the form of Roop Bhawani, devotional saints, Paramananda, Krishna Razdan, Prakash Ram, Sufi saints, Shams Faqir, Swachha Kral, Shah Gafoor, Nyama Sahib, Wahab Khar, spiritually enlightened sages, Krishna Kar, Reshi Peer, and a number of contemporary saints, Kash Kak, Mirza Kak, Nanda Bab, Bhagavaan Gopi Nath, Mathura Devi, and many others.

Some of these saints were erudite scholars, deeply seeped into the *'Shastras'*, who left behind a treasure of knowledge in the form of their writings. Some of them were devotional saints, who composed devotional songs and hymns in the local language in praise of their deities. Some were simply recluse, who spoke very little, communicated much less and remained absorbed with the Divine all the time. Some of them were outwardly eccentric but they performed miracles and alleviated people of their grief and suffering. Many people obtained peace of mind and solace by just sitting at their feet and many got guidance in spiritual practices for their self-realization. These sages either belonged to a centuries-old lineage of preceptors or were self-initiated. Majority of them were householders but some had renounced social bandages. Most of them appeared to be ordinary persons and had no outward ostentation, special dresses or special features. The spiritual practices taught by them were wide ranging, from yoga to devotion, from arousal of *'Kundalini'* to breath-control, from *'Mantra-japa'* to meditation and contemplation and from performance of rituals to *"Tantra"* discipline.

Unfortunately there is very little known about them. Much of what is known has come down to us verbally from generation to generation. Those who have left behind some profound literature also are silent about themselves. If at all there is any mention it is about the father or the preceptor of the sage, the author. Occasionally the date of composing a hymn is given and sometimes a reference is also found to an earlier or a contemporary saint. Under these circumstances it is very difficult to give the biographical account of these sages with any authenticity. There is no difficulty, however, about their writings, sayings and the philosophy propounded by them as these are in most cases duly recorded. Most of what has been composed by Sufi saints, devotee sages and scholar saints is available in manuscript, in print or in translations. Attempts have been made by different scholars to cull out the available information, marshal it and then record it suitably.

The publication of this volume is an attempt to collect as much material as is possible from various sources, about the Kashmirian sages, ancient and contemporary and put it at one place so that authentic information about the sages and saints of Kashmir is available to the readers and researchers alike. The scholars who have contributed papers on different sages for this book have taken pains to give authentic account of their lives, their teachings, the socio-political atmosphere in which they flourished and their impact in shaping and moulding the life of the people living in this pious valley. References are there about some extraordinary feats and miracles performed by some of them. A rational mind may not easily accept their genuineness. The idea behind mentioning these feats is not to show the spiritual powers that the saints possessed as much as it is to bring home the amount of kindness and compassion they had that prompted them to perform these miracles for the benefit of the common man.

There are many things common in the messages and teachings of these holy persons. They have always given importance to the subtle elements of the human existence and treated the gross body as a vehicle only to perform deeds by thought, word and action. All of them were full of compassion and they gave equal treatment to all and sundry irrespective of caste, creed or any other form of division. Truth, non-violence, tolerance, mutual respect, brotherhood and purity were the hallmark of their teachings. They laid stress on sincerity in worldly activities and sustained perseverance in the efforts towards spiritual uplift. The life of each one of them is a saga of spiritual quest for the Supreme Truth and of guiding the mankind so that divinity is manifest in all that we think, utter and do. All of them have lived like a lotus, untainted and unscathed by the water in which it grows. They have lived in the families and households but remained unaffected by the worldly bondages as stated in the Bhagavad Gita, '*Padmapatramiva.ambasa*—like a lotus pod in the water'.

Some of the articles included in this compilation have earlier appeared in some journals and publications. The main purpose of incorporating these papers is firstly to make this book as comprehensive as possible and secondly to put them in the shape of a book so that they are available to a wider readership. Readers will find more than one paper on some of the sages. This is because many scholars have studied them from different angles and with a different perspective and our desire was to present them all so that all the facets of these saints and sages are available to the distinguished readers and they are able to have a holistic view of these great souls. The editor is grateful to the erudite scholars who have contributed their papers for this book and to all those, whose earlier published papers have been incorporated in this book.

We are also grateful to the ICSSR for sanctioning the project 'on Saints and Sages . Under this project a seminar was held by the Kashmir Education, Culture, Science Society, New Delhi. A number of papers presented by various scholars at the seminar have been included in the present volume. We are sanguine that the readers will get an insight into the rich tradition of the Saints and Sages of Kashmir through this volume.

– ***T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'***
Editor

Inaugural address by the President

SAINTS AND SAGES OF KASHMIR

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this Seminar on Saints and Sages of Kashmir. This Seminar is part of our Research Project on "Kashmir: the Land and the People" sanctioned for the Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society by the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

We had requested Shri T.N. Dhar Kundan to coordinate the work relating to this Seminar. I must compliment him on his assiduous efforts and hard work, due to which we have a number of papers written by noted scholars. I believe more papers have been promised and will be received soon. In any case, Shri Kundan has decided to hunt for all the good articles that have been written about our saints and sages in the past, wherever these may have appeared. This will enable us to bring out an authentic and comprehensive anthology of the life stories and teachings of the major saints and sages of Kashmir. We can have more than one piece on a personality, if a different facet is thereby revealed. In case any of you wish to write papers or provide photocopies of material that has appeared in the past or suitable references, you may please contact Shri Kundan. We would like to bring out a really worthwhile and memorable publication, even if it takes a little more time.

The subject of saints and sages evokes an instant response in our hearts, because of the long and hallowed tradition of our community, in which everybody has been the disciple or follower of some eminent sage or the other. The valley of Kashmir with its deep silences, its lofty mountains, its peace-filled greenery, its limpid lakes and its musical streams has been an ideal location for *sadhana.* Kashmiri Pandits have attained to *samadhi* more naturally and quickly than anywhere else in the Indian subcontinent.

There are many features of the Kashmiri Pandit character that can be directly traced to the influence of saints and sages. One of the greatest achievements of Kashmir Shaivism is its concept of the world being as real as God. Advaita Vedanta as propagated by Adi Shankaracharya conceives of Brahman being the sole reality, while the *Jagat* is dismissed as *mithya*. This has resulted in one of the greatest fiascos in Indian philosophy. The traditional interpretation of Shankaracharya seems to consider the world as unreal.

This mistake has caused a tremendous damage to Hindu society. If the world is unreal, we have to escape from it. We have to move from the Unreal to the Real. Thus we create a dichotomy that does not exist.

In more recent times, Sri Ramakrishna has settled this controversy by saying that unreal in this context means 'temporary, ephemeral, ever-changing'. No one would quarrel with this interpretation that seeks to remove the other worldliness from the Hindu way of life.

A natural corollary of *Mayavad* has been the placing of the *sanyasi* in the seat of honour, while denigrating the *grihastha* as one entangled in worldly pursuits. It is a philosophy like this that has converted Hinduism from the fun-filled pragmatism of the Upanishads to the dull, boring withdrawal from all worldly activities that is so characteristic of later Hinduism. It has encouraged a large number of frustrated youth to take to *sanyas,* because the ochre robe immediately commands respect and obedience. If one can boast of a few *siddhis,* one can easily set up a spiritual centre and practise spirituality like a lucrative profession.

Kashmiri Pandits have fortunately been free from such aberrations. Most of our saints and sages have been householders, many of them have married and had children, and even if they were celibates they have lived with their own households or those of their disciples. Most of them have not worn the saffron clothes of a *sanyasi* and many of them have been non-vegetarians. Thus their teachings have a life-affirming tendency and not a life-negating trend. They have not asked their devotees to forsake their families or run away to the cave or the jungle.

It is the influence of his saints and sages that has made the Kashmiri Pandit the pragmatist that he is. The KP is eminently practical in his approach to life. Life is a precious boon conferred on us by God. In fact, our life is a creative process through which Param Shiva realizes his own potential for play. It is not for us to speculate how we got entangled in this process, nor is it really possible for us to escape on our own. The entire play is scripted, produced and directed by Param Shiva. When he is in the *nigraha* mode, the play starts, and when he switches over to the *anugraha* mode, the play starts nearing its end. Param Shiva is an independent, self-willed Power, who is his own law. Nothing that we do can deflect him from his self-chosen course.

Our pragmatism makes us grapple with the real outside world, whatever shape it may assume. We have taken on the challenge of survival in an area where our population steadily dwindled as a consequence of religious persecution and systematic oppression. Survival often meant compromise. We have been quick to learn the language of the latest conqueror, be it Sanskrit, Persian or English and have in the process, neglected Kashmiri our mother tongue. When the Muslim rulers established their stranglehold, we created the *karkuns* who would dress like the rulers, dine with them and have social intercourse with them, while a cadre of *gurus* was tasked to preserve our religion, ritual and culture. And when we were threatened with the loss of our lives and our womenfolk, we decided to migrate *en masse* to new climes so that we could survive and start a new life.

While this pragmatism has helped us survive, there is another element infused in us by our saints and sages. This is a constant striving for excellence in whatever we do. We have hypercritical intellects and are happiest when we pick holes in what other people are doing. While this constant, carping criticism can have a negative impact sometimes, it hones our intellectual faculties to perfection. It also refuses to accept anything but the best or the ideal in conversation, food, dress, work, philosophy or whatever field of endeavour we are in. It makes us unsure of ourselves and set high targets for achievement. Because we are so few in number, each one of us is a lone ranger, who has got to prove himself on his own, without any support system. Behind our great successes in various fields lie the values we have imbibed from the saints—diligence, patience, perseverance, truth, non-violence, straightforwardness, purity, loyalty, integrity, obedience, innovativeness, and, above all, good humour and the ability to laugh at ourselves.

A question may well be asked: when we have so many saints and sages to protect us, why have we always suffered so much?

An answer is vouchsafed in the Mahabharata, where Bhishma is lying on a bed of arrows. Tears stream out of his eyes and he tells Krishna, "Lord! I see the Pandavas and I see all the suffering they have gone through. I know that the Lord is on their side. Seeing them suffer, I feel that I have not understood anything of the divine mystery."

At another place, Kunti tells Krishna," O Lord! Please grant me the boon that there should be no end to my misery. For it is only when we suffer that we human remember God."

If we go by what our great saints have promised, we have it on the authority of Swami Lakshmanjoo that Kashmiri Pandits will return to Kashmir from the year 2003 onwards and they will again live in honour and dignity. Bhagvaan Gopinath has always been protecting the Kashmiri Pandits and with him around we should have nothing to fear. When I asked Sri Sathya Sai Baba when the Kashmir problem would be solved, he looked quizzically at me, "Problem? What Kashmir problem?"

Also let us not forget what Farooq Abdullah is reported to have told his followers some time back: "You fools! You think the Kashmiri Pandits are finished. In these years of migration, they have trained 50,000 youth in engineering, medicine, management, information technology and the like. All you have done is to create 50,000 jehadis."

Let me end on a note of optimism. Our national motto is *Satyameva Jayate* or "Truth alone triumphs". If truth is on our side, eventually we should overcome all the obstacles and difficulties. Meanwhile, we have to be patient and perseverant and continue our striving for excellence, so that people of other communities are forced to ask who our saints and sages and role models are. That is the greatest tribute we can pay our spiritual masters, whose indomitable spirit has kept us alive and vibrant even after centuries of repression and tyranny.

Inaugural Address delivered by Shri Maharaj Krishen Kaw, President, KECSS on the occasion of the Seminar on Saints and Sages of Kashmir organized by KECSS on 20th April 2003 at Pamposh School, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi.

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Buddham saranam gacchami
Sangham saranam gacchami
Dharmam saranam gacchami

I surrender to Buddha, the enlightened.
I surrender to the Congregation.
I surrender to the Righteousness.

CHAPTER 1

BUDDHIST SAGES AND SCHOLARS FROM KASHMIR

—DR. ADVAITAVADINI KAUL

In the history of Buddhism, Kashmir enjoys a very significant position. Ever since its introduction (during 3rd century B.C.)[1] Buddhism continued to flourish and enjoy popularity in the valley. The benign patronage of the pious rulers with Buddhist leanings gave it a fillip and a large number of monasteries/viharas with rich endowments were constructed throughout the valley. These viharas, in course of time, became great centres of Buddhist study and research and a large number of authentic Buddhist texts and expository commentaries were composed by the distinguished Buddhists in Sanskrit who adorned these centres of Buddhist studies. These flourishing centres not only attracted the attention of Buddhist scholars in the country but several Buddhist celebrities of other countries also flocked to the valley to gain first-hand knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures

Numerous Kashmiri Buddhist also elected to work in the neighbouring areas of Afghanistan, Central Asia, China and Tibet in order to spread the message of the Buddha. They not only composed original texts in Sanskrit but their direct contribution also embraces both, the works in translations and religious practices. With the result we find that Kashmir played a vital role in the development of Buddhist philosophy and literature in Sanskrit and also its further propagation in various parts of neighbouring countries. The Chinese and Tibetan collections of Buddhist texts record the names and details of considerable number of Buddhist from scholars and monks from Kashmir who undertook the translation of various Buddhist texts individually or in collaboration with other Buddhists from other parts of India and also with native Buddhists from each region. Kashmiri Buddhists contributed to the greatness and importance of the place in the history of propounding Buddhism until the last centuries of its decline in India. Their work and virtues were respected by the Buddhists of other countries. Many of them were invited by the Chinese or Tibetan rulers and scholars to their countries. What is most important and interesting to note is that all these details come to us from the documents discovered or found in these areas. Unfortunately the available ancient records of India including those of Kashmir give only stray information about the missionary activities of these Buddhists. Therefore on the basis of the available material a comprehensive and authentic account of distinguished Buddhists of Kashmir is presented here. The data has been divided into four parts. Part one gives account of those Buddhists who preached Buddhist learning in the valley itself attracting a large number of adherents. In part two, attention has been focused on those Buddhists of Kashmir who travelled outside the valley in Central Asia and China between 4th and 11th centuries A.D. In part three the details of those Buddhists are given who undertook the arduous journey over rugged terrain under very trying situations to reach Tibet and popularize Buddhism among the people there right from the 7th century up to the 14th century A.D. Part four focuses on the life and works of a few prominent Buddhist scholars who have been great sages and had connections with Kashmir. They also studied and worked in Kashmir and have left indelible impressions of their scholarship on Buddhist Philosophy and literature.

I. KASHMIRI BUDDHISTS IN KASHMIR

DHARMATRATA : Dharmatrata was a great Vaibhasika of Kashmir.

According to Taranatha, Sudra, a wealthy brahmana of Kashmir, was the patron of Dharmatrata and his attendant monks[2]. Yuan Chwang ascribes to Dharmatrata the authorship of an Abhidharma treatise called *Tsa-abhidharmalun*[3]. This work, according to the same authority was composed by Dharmatrata in a monastery near Puskaravati, the ancient capital of Gandhara[4]. Another important work attributed to Dharmatrata is the *Udanavarga* which is the Sanskrit version of Pali *Dhammapada* and is considered as an agama by the Vaibhasikas[5].

The first Chinese translation of a collection of *gathas* by Dharmatrata was made somewhere between 221-223 A.D.[6] As such

Dharmatrata must have lived before 3rd century A. D. In the genealogy of *dhyana* masters of Kashmir, given by a Chinese monk Hui-Kuan (433 A.D.), Dharmatrata figures prominently as founder of a particular school of *dhyana* which was introduced in China by Buddhabhadra and it had an important place in the canons of meditation.[7]

HARIVARMAN : Harivarman was a famous Sarvastivadin teacher of Kashmir. He was a student of Acarya Kumaralata the master of the Sautrantika school of Buddhism. In Chinese language Harivarman's name is found as Pomo. He composed a valuable work in 253 A.D. When this work was composed, the Buddhist church was divided into different schools, such as Sarvastivadin, Dharmagupta, Mahisasaka, Kasyapiya, Vatsiputriya etc. These schools were contending amongst themselves, and as such drifting from the spirit of original teachings of the Buddha. Feeling sorry for wrong interpretations of the teachings of the Buddha, Harivarman made an attempt to go through the texts of all the schools and then returning to the basic point of the real teachings, he composed the *Satyasiddhi sastra* which became a source of inspiration and right knowledge. Traditionally the *sastra* is believed to have become a part of the famous *Tripitaka* and thus it has played a significant role in including the Buddhist thought of the day in the *Tripitaka*[8].

SKANDHILA : Skandila was a teacher of Sanghabhadra (see below). According to Yuan Chwang, *So-Kan-ti-lo* (Skandhila) was a sastra-master who lived in monastery of Kashmir where he composed *Chung-shih-fen-Pi-P'o-shalun* or *Vibhasaprakaranapada sastra*[10] He wrote another treatise, called *Juabhidharma-lun,* which in Sanskrit may be rendered as *Abhidarmavatara sastra* orra *Abhidarmapravesana sastra.* This small treatise is an introduction to the study of Abhidharma. It was later translated into Chinese by Yuan Chwan[12]. Since Vasubandhu (5th cen. A. D.) studied with Sanghabhadra[11], Skandhila, the teacher of Sanghabhadra, would appear to have lived in the second half of the 5th century A.D.

SANGHABHADRA : Sanghabhadra was a native of Kashmir and a profound scholar of the *Vibhasa sastra* of the Sarvastivadin School[13]. He was the teacher of Vasubandhu during the latter's visit to Kashmir in connection with his study of the Buddhist lore. He was the teacher of another Kashmiri scholar Vimalamitra. Sanghabhadra composed *Chun-tching-li-lun,* during his stay in a monastery of Kashmir, which according to Yuan-Chwang was situated on a mountain to the south-east of the capital[14]. The treatise had been composed in order to refute Vasubandu's *Abhidharmakosa* and was given the name *Kosa Pao* or *Bud-hail sastra.* Sanghabhadra entrusted his work to some of his sharpest disciples and instructed them to make use of it to undermine the superiority of Vasubandhu. He himself left alongwith his chief disciples to meet Vasubandhu in Ayodhya. But the moment Vasubandhu was informed of his arrival he left Ayodhya. Sanghabhadra reached the place but could not see Vasubandhu. He died at that very place. On his death-bed he wrote a letter to Vasubandhu begging for his apology and handed over the same to his disciples alongwith his own treatise. When Vasubandhu received this letter he was deeply moved and after going through the treatise he told his disciples that the work was not perfect in doctrine. It was easy to refute it. But Vasubandhu did not do so out of regard for Sanghabhara's dying request and also because, the work expounded the views of those (Vaibhasikas), whom he had followed. He only gave a new title to the treatise, *Shun-Cheng-li-lun* or *Nyayanusara-sastra,* i.e., which agrees with the orthodox principles[15].

Sanghabhadra's ashes after his cremation were collected and enshrined in a *stupa* attached to the Sangharama, two hundred paces or so to the north-west in a wood of mango trees where, according to Yuan Chwang, they could be seen even at the time of his visit[16].

VIMALAMITRA : Vimalamitra (*Pi-mo-lo-mi-to-lo* or *wou hau yau* 'Spotless friend'), we learn from Yuan Chwang, was a native of Kashmir[17]. He was a follower of Sarvastivada school and a disciple of Sanghabhadra. He studied a large number of *sutras* and investigated various *sastras.* He travelled extensively in India to learn the mysteries of *Tripitaka.* Having accomplished his work and gained a name he returned to his home. On his way back he passed by the *stupa* of his teacher Sanghabhadra. He sighed and expressed sorrow over the death of his master. Feeling uneasy he said : "This master was truly distinguished, his views pure and eminent. After having spread abroad the great principles (of his faith), he purposed to overthrow those of other schools and lay firmly the fabric of his own. Why then should his fame not be eternal? I, Vimalamitra, foolish as I am, have received at various times the knowledge of the deep principles of his departed wisdom; his distinguished qualities have been cherished through successive generations. Vasubandhu, though dead, yet lives in the tradition of the school. That which I know so perfectly (ought to be preserved). I will write, then, such *sastras* as will cause the learned men of Jambudvipa to forget the name of the great vehicle and destroy the fame of Vasubandhu. This will be an immortal work, and will be the accomplishment of my long-meditated design[18]. Soon after, according to Yuan Chwang, his condition became very miserable and on his death-bed he wrote the following letter to signify his repentance :

"The doctrine of the great vehicle in the law of Buddha contains the final principles. Its renown may fade, but its depth or reason is inscrutable. I foolishly dared to attack its distinguished teachers. The reward of my works is plain to all. It is for this I die. Let me address men of wisdom, who may learn from my example to guard well their thoughts, and not give way to the encouragement of doubts"[19].

Yuan Chwang records that when Vimalamitra breathed his last there was a great earth-tremor and a ditch was formed at the place of his death. The mortal remains of Vimalamitra were consigned to fire. The ashes were latter collected and a *stupa* as erected over them in the sacred memory of the departed master[20].

PURNA: Purna called *Pu-la-na* in the Chinese texts, was a *Sastra*-master who, according to Yuan Chwang, lived in the monastery called *Shaug-lin*, situated to the north-west of the capital of Kashmir. Here he composed a commentary on *Vibhasa-sastra*[21]. The monastery has not been identified.

BODHILA : Bodhila was another reputed master from Kashmir, who, according to Yuan Chwang, lived in a monastery situated "to the west of the capital, north of a large river and adjoining the southern side of a hill"[22]. The hill, referred to by the Chinese pilgrim, evidently denotes the present hill of Sankaracarya and the large river the Vitasta or Jhelum which flows nearby. The monastery must have been somewhere at the site of the present day Badambagh cantonment, situated to the south of the Sankaracarya hill. The monastery belonged to the Mahasanghika school and it was here that Bodhila composed a treatise called in Sanskrit *Tattva-sangraha* and in Chinese as *Chi-chen-lun.* The work expounded the philosophy of the Mahasanghika schoo1[23].

YASA: Yasa is known to us from the travel account of Yuan Chwang, as a reputed scholar who was appointed by the ruling king to look after the pilgrim, a state-guest in the former's palace. He provided all facilities and assistance to Yuan Chwang in the study and translation of the Buddhist texts. According to the pilgrim, Yasa alias Bhadanta was a Hinayanist[24].

DHARMOTTARACARYA : Dharmottaracarya was a Buddhist logician of Kashmir, who hailed during the 8th century

A.D. He was the pupil of Kashmiri Dharmakara Dutta. He wrote commentaries on two works of Dharmakirti (the well known Buddhist logician), viz., 1. *Pramanaviniscaya;* and 2. *Nyayabindhu.* He also composed the following works :

1. The *Ksanabhangasiddhi,* i.e., 'Demonstration of the momentariness of things'. It was translated into Tibetan by Bhavyaraja of Kashmir and Blo-Idan-ses-rab, a renowned Tibetan interpreter.
2. The *Pramanapariksa,* i.e. 'Examination of *pramana* or the sources of valid knowledge'. There are two forms of this composition, both of which have been translated into Tibetan by Blo-Idan-ses-rab.
3. The *Apohaprakarana,* i.e. 'the Treatise on exclusion of contradictory proposition', translated by Bhavyaraja and Blo-Idan-ses-rab.
4. The *Paralokasiddhi,* i.e., 'Demonstration concerning the world beyond', translated by Bhavyaraja and a monk named Tsabhni-ma-grags in Kashmir, during the life time of Sri Harsa (king of Kashmir, 1089-1101 A.D.)[25].

RAVIGUPTA (or SURYAGUPTA) : Ravigupta was a Kashmiri Buddhist belonging to the 8th century A.D.[26] He was a teacher of Sarvajnamitra of Kashmir[27]. According to Taranatha, this *acarya* held that the views of Acarya Nagarjuna and Acarya Asanga were the same, i.e. the doctrines of *Sunyat* and *cittamatrata* are identical. According to the statement of Taranatha, Suryagupta built twelve centres of the doctrine in Kashmir and Magadha. He was proficient in magic spells and was Tara-*siddha*[28], i.e. he had attained the *siddhi* of the Goddess Tara. The following account of Ravigupta is recorded in the *Bule Annals*[29] :

"It is said that in the country of Kashmir there had been an image of the Ta'u Tara endowed with miraculous powers *(siddhi)* in the temple of *Ran-byun Iha-Ina*. Lepers, after worshipping the image, were cured of their ailment. About that time Acarya Ravigupta (*Ni-ma sbas-Pa*), who was learned in the five sciences and especially in the tantra was attacked by leprosy *(Klu'i gnod-Pa)*. He built a hut for himself to the west of the *vihara,* and prayed for three months. Then the temple's gate moved (by itself) westwards, and the Tara said : What is your wish? and the acarya replied : 'I wish to be cured of leprosy'. In that very moment his entire body, except for a small sore on his forehead, assumed its former appearance. He asked :

'What was the reason for not curing the sore of the forehead? The Tara replied : 'Formerly you were born as a hunter, killed animals and in the end set fire to a forest. In consequence of this, you were reborn in Hell and this is your last rebirth of the five hundred rebirths in Hell, and saying so, she bestowed on him the *sadhana,* accompanied by a *stotra* (which was recited as *mantra).* The Tara said, 'with their help one may perform any kind of magic rite. It shall grant you miraculous powers *(siddhis)'* . After that the acarya composed a magic rite which corresponded to the twenty-one *sadhanas,* as well as general rites and their branches".

This ritual was taught by Ravigupta to his disciples and in course of time it earned great proficiency in Tibet also[30]. Following works of Ravigupta are perserved in Tibetan *Bstan' gyur*[31] :

1. *Taradeviistotra ekavimsatikasadhana*
2. *Aryatarabhattarikasadhana Sakalpakavinsakakarmasanksepa*
3. *Bhagavatitaradevyakavinsatistotropayika*
4. *Devitaraikavimsatistotravisuddhacucamani*
5. *The Aryatarabhattarikanama dvatrinsatkastotra sarvarthasadhakaratnalarikaramanisha.*
6. *The Aryatarastotra* and
7. *The Tarasadhanopadesakrama.*

SARVAJNAMITRA : Sarvajnamitra was a famous Buddhist monk of Kashmir, described by Kalhana as one 'who set himself as another Jina (Buddha)'. He lived in a monastery, called Kayyavihara, founded by Kayya, the king of Lata owing allegiance to king Lalitaditya of Kashmir (701-738 A. D.)[32]. Thus, Sarvajnamitra would appear to have lived in the later half of the 8th century A.D. He was a worshipper of Tara and was known for his generousness. Taranatha gives the following biographical account of Sarvajnamitra :

He was an extra(martial) son of a king of Kashmir (probably the con- temporary of king Lalitaditya or his predecessor). When still a baby he was carried away by a vulture when his mother had left him on the terrace, herself having gone to pluck flowers. The baby was taken to a peak of Mount Gandhola in Nalanda. There he was received by some Pandits under whose protection he grew-up and became a monk well-versed in the *Pitakas*. He propitiated the Goddess Tara by whose favours he received enormous wealth which he distributed among the needy. At last when he had nothing left to donate he left towards the south fearing that he would have to send the suppliants back without giving alms to them which would be against his wishes. On his journey to the south he met an old blind brahmin led by his son. He was going to Nalanda to implore aid from Sarvajnamitra, about whose generosity he had heard a lot.

Sarvajnamitra told him that he was the same person but had exhausted all his wealth. Hearing this the brahmin heaved an afflictive sigh with which Sarvajnamitra felt boundless compassion for him and decided to get money for him anyhow. While searching for money he found a king named Sarana who was passionately attached to false views. This king wanted to purchase 108 men for offering them to sacrificial fire. He had already procured 107 men and was in search of one more. Sarvajnamitra sold himself for the gold equal to the weight of his body. He gave this gold to the brahmin who returned happy.

Sarvajnamitra was put in the royal prison. The other prisoners were overpowered by grief seeing that the number was complete and their death was quite near. When fire was kindled, they started wailing. Again, the great acarya felt boundless compassion and he earnestly prayed to the Goddess Tara. The goddess flowed a stream of nectar over the fire and people could see rains coming down only on the fire. When the fire was extinguished the place turned to be a lake. Seeing this wonderful event, the king was filled with admiration for the acarya. The prisoners were released with rewards.

The acarya after the lapse of a long time, wished to be at his birth place. So he prayed to the goddess. He was asked to catch hold of the corner of her clothes and shut the eyes. When he reopened his eyes he found himself in a beautiful land in front of a magnificent palace. He could not recognise this place and asked the goddess why she had not taken him to Nalanda. She told him that this was his real birth place. He stayed in Kashmir and founded a big temple of Goddess Tara. Taranatha further states that he was a disciple of Suryagupta or Ravigupta[33]. The same description is found with minor variations in the commentary on the *Sragdharastotra* by Jinaraksita[34].

The *Sragdharastotra* is a hymn containing thirty seven verses which Sarvajnamitra wrote in praise of Goddess Tara. *Sragdhara* is an epithet of Tara which means 'wearer of the wreath' or 'the garland bringer' and it is also the name of the metre in which the hymn was written. Tibetan collection the *Bstan-'gyur* contains three translations of the text. [The hymn, with its commentary and two Tibetan versions, is edited by S.C. Vidyabhushana in *Bibliotheca series* (1908)].

Besides *Sragdharastotra* other texts attributed to Sarvajnamitra are all in praise of Goddess Tara, viz.,

1. *Devitarakuvakyadhyesana nama stotra,*
2. *Aryatarasadhana,* and
3. *Astabhayatranatarosadhana*[35].

SANKARANANDA : Sankarananda was a Kashmiri brahman. He was specially proficient in logic. Once he thought of composing a new treatise on logic in order to refute the great Buddhist logician Dharmakirti. But in a dream Manjusri (god of wisdom) told him "Dharmakirti was an *arya* and so it is not possible for you to refute him. The faults that you imagine to be there in his views are due to your own wrong understanding". He was soon after seized with repentance. To make amends he wrote commentaries on seven treatises of Dharmakirti which procured him great honour and riches[36]. later Sankarananda received the title of *Paramopasaka mahapandita brahmana* and was considered a second Dharmakirti[37].

Four of his works are preserved in Tibetan translation. These are[38] :

1. The *Pramanavarttikatika*, a commentary on *Pramanavartika* of Dharmakirti.
2. The *Sambandhapariksanusara*, a commentary on the *Sambandhapariksaprakarana*, also attributed to Dharmakirti.
3. The Apohasiddhi, dealing with the exclusion of self and others by means of the doctrine of the '*apoha*'.
4. The *Pratibandhasiddhi*, according to its title, deals with the establishment of the casual succession.

GANGADHARA : Gangadhara was Kashmiri scholar and teacher of the great Kashmiri Buddhist propounder Ratnavajra (11th century) and of a great Tibetan translator Rin-chen-bzan-po. He was perhaps a *tantrikacarya* as his only available work the *Vajravidaranisadhana* deals with tantra[39].

SOMASRI : Somasri was *mahapandita* of Kashmir. He was the teacher of Parahitabhadra of Kashmir (11th century). He has written the following texts, dealing with *Namasangitiyogatantra*.[40] :

1. *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitisadhana,*
2. *Aryamanjusrinamasangitimandalopayika,*
3. *Aryamanjusrinamasangitisarvamandalastotra,* and
4. *Vimsatyakarabhisamodhikramena bhagavanmanjusrisadhana.*

SAJJANA : Sajjana was grandson of Ratnavajra, referred to above and son of brahman Mahajana[41]. His teacher was a brahmana called Sribhadra or Suryaketu[42]. Though he was a layman, his reputation as a great master attracted towards him the gathering of numerous students in the capital *Gron Khyer dpe-med* (Anupamapura)[43]. His fame surpassed even that of his own father[44]. Sajjana is considered as an originator of the movement of the *Anuttarayogatantra* in Kashmir. His teachings reveal the doctrine of *cittamatrata* and are known in Tibet as *Byams-Chos* (the doctrine of Maitreya)[45]. The teaching was introduced in Tibet through his Tibetan students. The great Tibetan translator Blo-ldan-ses rab heard the exposition of this doctrine from Sajjana when the former was studying in Kashmir[46]. Another Tibetan, named Kha- bo-Che, who accompanied Blo-Idan-ses-rab, also studied under Sajjana[47]. The author of the *Blue Annals,* Gzon-nu dpal, relates that although both the Tibetans had heard the exposition of the five treatises of Maitreya from the same teacher (Sajjana), their method of exposition of the basic texts differed[48]. According to the history of the school of bTsan the *Mahayanottaratantrasastra* and the *Dharmadharmatavibhangakarika* had remained unknown to scholars. Maitri-Pa rediscovered these two treatises in a *stupa* wherefrom emanated a supernatural light. He prayed to Maitreya Ajita who appeared before him and expounded the two treatises to him. Maitri-Pa preached these to Anandakirti who is said to have come to Kashmir disguised as a begger. In Kashmir, when Sajjana saw him, he recognized him as an eminent person. He paid him homage and thus obtained from him the two treatises. Sajjana made several copies of these two treatises and offered them to Pandit Jnanasri and others[47]. These two treatises, plus the *Mahayanasutralankarakanka,* the *Madhyantavaibhanga* and the *Abhisamayalankara* are called the five treatises of Maitreya.

It is said that a commentary on the *Sutralankara* was written down by the translator named Pad-ma-Seri-ge. He had written it at the time of his meeting with Sajjana[50]. A letter written by Sajjana is preserved in Tibetan translation. He is said to have written it to his son *Suksamajana (brahmana sajjanena putraya presita lekha)*[51]. Sajjan translated in collaboration with Blo-Idan-ses rab, the *Uttaratantrasastra* (attributed to Maitreya) and *Uttaratantra-sastravyakhya.*[52]

MAHASUMATI : Mahasumati of Kashmir was a great logician and known *mahatarkika.* He was the pupil of Parahita of Kashmir who confided to him the teachings based on the *Prasannapada* and the *Madhyamakavatarabhasya*[53]. His name occurs among the chief logicians under whom the great Tibetan translator Blo-ldan ses-rab received instruction in the monasteries of Kashmir[54]. He collaborated with another Tibetan translator, Ni-ma grags, at the Ratnaguptavihara in Kashmir. Together they translated :

The *Prasannapada* of Candrakirti, which is a commentary of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* of Nagarjuna. They also corrected the Tibetan translation of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* which was previously done by *Jnanagarbha* and Klui rgyal-mchan. The correction was undertaken after a comparsion with its commentary[55].

MANORATHA : Manoratha was also amongst the chief logicians under whom Blo-Idan-Ses rab received instructions in Kashmir[56]. With this Tibetan translator he (Manoratha) translated the *Apohasiddhi* of Sankarananda at *Gron-Khyer-dpe-med* (Anupamapura) in Kashmir[57].

ARCATA : Arcata originally a brahmana, became a great Buddhist scholar of Kashmir as is evidenced by his work on logic, named *Hetu-bindu-vivarna*. It is a commetary on the *Hetu-bindu* of Dharmakirti. The work of Arcata which is preserved in Tibetan *Bstan-hgyur* is divided into four chapters dealing respectively with:

1. Identity *(svabhava);*
2. Effect *(karya);*
3. Non-perception (*anupalabdhi) ;* and
4. Explanation of six characteristics *(sadlaksana-vyakhya).*

Mention of Arcata has been made by two Jaina authors Gunaratnasuri (1409 A.D.) and Ratnaprabhasuri (1181 A.D.). The former also mentions another work ofArcata named the *Tarkatika*[58].

II. KASHMIRI BUDDHIST SCHOLARS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND CHINA

SANGHABHUTI : Sanghabhuti is reported to be the first Buddhist scholar of Kashmir who went to China. He had specialized in the *Abhidharmavibhasa*. His name is given in Chinese transcription as *Seng-kia-po-ch'eng* and in translation as Chong hien. He reached the northern capital of China in 381 A.D. and was received by the leading Buddhist scholars in China. At their request, Sanghabhuti translated a number of Buddhist texts into Chinese. He is said to have translated three works uptill 384 A.D. The most important work among these was an extensive commentary on the disciplinary code, i.e., the Vinaya Pitaka of the *Sarvastivada* school[59].

GAUTAMA SANGHADEVA : Gautama Sanghadeva was a Buddhist scholar of Kashmir who had specialised in the *Abhidharma*. He reached Khanan, the Chinese capital of the former Tsin Dynasty of Fu family, in 383 A.D. This was the period when Sanghabhuti was still working in China. The name of Gautama Sanghadeva is given in Chinese transliteration as *Kiu-t'an Seng-Kia-tipo* and in translation as *Chong t'ien* ("community god"). He came to Ch'ang ngam in 384 A.D. and stayed in the north till 391 A.D. Being a scholar of profound knowledge, he revised the earliest translations and explained the texts to his Chinese colleagues during his stay in the north and also acquired a knowledge of the Chinese language. He went to South China in 391 A.D. and joined the famous Buddhist institution Lu-shan. This institution was founded by a Chinese Buddhist scholar, named Hui-Yuan, who played a great role in the co-ordination of Buddhist studies in China. Gautama Sanghadeva translated here some Sanskrit texts. The *Tridharmaka-sastra* is the work he translated in 391 A.D. under the Chinese title *San-fa-tu-lun*. He further went to Nanking in 397 A. D. where he made a deep impression on the ruling class and it is said that one of them even built a monastery for him to carry on his literary work. Here also he translated a number of important Buddhist texts with the assistance of his Chinese friends and Kashmirian followers. The Chinese version of the *Madhyamagamasutra* which is rather similar to the Majjhima Nikaya of the Hinayana school, was completed in 397-398 A.D. He translated the *Abhidharmahrithadaya sastra* also under the Chinese title *O-Phi-than-sin-lun*. In all he translated eight works into Chinese[60].

PUNYATRATA : Punyatrata was another Buddhist scholar of Kashmir. He was the teacher of Dharmayasas of Kashmir. His name is given in Chinese transcription as *Fo-jo-to-lo* and in translation as *Kong-to-hua*. He reached China during Hun-Sh period, i.e. 399-415 A.D. Here he came under the influence of great mastermind Kumarajiva and found a chance to work with him. In collaboration with Kumarajiva he translated in twenty-nine sections the *Dasadhaya Vinaya*, (*Sarvastivada-vinaya)* under the Chinese title *Shih-sun-lun* in the year 404 A.D. He was probably in Kucha when Kumarajiva was taken to China and he followed him to China to help him in the work of translation[61].

DHARMAYASAS : Dharmayasas was yet another Buddhist of Kashmir whose name is given in Chinese transliteration as *Tan-mo-ye-she* and in translation as *Faming* or *Fa-Cheng* ('Law glory'). He was a pupil of Punyatrata. At the age of thirty years he left the country, first travelled in various countries of Central Asia and then reached China some time between 397-414 A.D. and transitlated three works into Chinese. One of them is not available, while other two include:

1. *Strivivarta-vyakarana-sutra,* and
2. *Sariputrabhidharma-sastra*

Dharmayasas is said to have returned to Central Asia after completing his work in China. It is likely that he returned to his homeland later in his life[62].

BUDDHAYASAS : Buddhayasas was one of those Buddhist monks of Kashmir who were attracted to Kucha when Kumarajiva was there. His name is transcribed into Chinese as *Fo-to-ye-she* and translated as *Kio ming.*

Buddhayasas belonged to a brahmana family of Kashmir. He was the only son of his parents. His father was a non-believer in Buddhism who once, is said to have assaulted a Buddhist monk. Retribution came in the form of sudden paralysis of his hands. Realising his misdeed he searched for the monk and invited him to his home and honoured him well. To show his deep reverence to the monk he offered his only son Yasa who was at that time only thirteen years old. Yasa was taken to distant countries and was given instructions in Buddhist lore. At the age of twenty-seven he completed his studies and thus became a full-fledged Buddhist monk. Now, Buddhayasas started for foreign countries. He first went to Kashgar (*Su-leb*) in response to an invitation from the ruler who had invited three thousand Buddhist monks on religious occasion. Amongst such a large number of invitees the ruler was so highly impressed with the striking appearance and manners of Buddhayasas that he invited him to live in the palace. The ruler became his devout follower. Buddhayasas was made to stay in Kashgar for a number of years. It was here that he came in contact with Kumarajiva who was travelling back to Kucha from Kashmir. Together they studied some sacred texts for sometime and then Kumarajiva prodceeded to Kucha.

Kucha was then invaded by the Chinese army. The ruler of Kashgar went to its aid leaving his young prince incharge of Buddhayasas. But Kucha was already conquered by the Chinese General before he reached there. Kumarajiva was taken to China as a prisoner. Buddhayasas was pained to hear this news. He remained in Kashgar for ten years more and then went to Kucha. In Kucha, he stayed for one year. He wrote a letter to Kumarajiva expressing his desire to join him. At last he could find a chance to join Kumarajiva in the Chinese capital, Ch'ang-ngan. He worked with Kumarajiva for sometime and himself translated some works into Chinese. Four Sanskrit works are attributed to him which he translated between

410-413 A.D.; one of these is the translation of the *Akasagarbha-bodhisattvasutra*. He also translated the *Dirghagama* and the *Dharmagupta Vinaya* into Chinese. One more work ascribed to him is the translation of the *Dharmagupta Pratimoksha*.

It is believed that Buddhayasas returned to Kashmir after Kumarajiva's death. It is said that he was a man of high moral character and refused to accept gifts offered to him by the Chinese emperor, saying that a Buddhist monk had no right to accept such gifts[63].

VIMALAKSA : Vimalaksa was another celebrated monk of Kashmir. His name is given in Chinese transcription as *Pi-mo-lo-ch'a* and in translation as *Wu Ke yen*. He went to Kucha and studied in the Miracle Monastery. This monastery is called *Wang-Ssu* or Royal Vihara also by other writers. Here the monks came to study the Vinaya. It was here that Vimalaksa acquired great fame as a Vinaya-master. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang, who visited the monastery, writes : "The Miracle Monastery, drew learned brethren from distant places to it and it seems that these men came chiefly to study the Vinaya. One of these great students was Vimalaksa, popularly known as the dark-eyed, Vinaya master, a contemporary of Kumarajiva"[64].

Kumarajiva studied the Vinaya texts with him in Kucha. Afterwards, the former was taken as a prisoner to China where he started translating under royal command. Vimalaksa also started for China reaching there in 406 A.D. In China, he met his old pupil Kumarajiva who cordially received and respected him. Vimalaksa stayed in Ch'ang-ngan from 406 to 413 A.D., translated a number of works himself and explained the translations made by Kumarajiva to Chinese scholars. After Kumarajiva's death in 413 A.D., he went to South China, where he spent the rest of his life preaching Buddhism. Here, he is said to have translated two works; one of them being the translation of the *Dasadhyayavinaya*. He died in the year 418 A.D. at the age of seventyseven[65].

BUDDHAJIVA : Buddhajiva was a teacher of Vinaya in Kashmir. He was one of those monks who reached South China by the sea-route. His name is given in Chinese transcription as *Fo-to-She* and in translation as *Kiao She*. He reached Nanking in 423 A.D. He was a collaborator of Fa-hien and translated some important manuscripts which Fa-hien had brought from India. Being a follower of mahisasaka school, translations of three works of the same school are ascribed to him. The *Mahisasaka Vmaya* and the *Pratimoksha* of

Mahisasaka are two of these works. Buddhajiva is believed to have stayed in China till his death[66].

DHARMAMITRA : Dharmamitra was another Buddhist monk of Kashmir. His name is given in Chinese transliteration as *T'an-mo-mi-to* and in translation as *Fa Siu* ('Law flourishing'). He first went to Kucha and then travelled in different parts of Central Asia. He was not allowed to proceed to China by the officials of this country. But he secretly reached Tu-huang in 424 A.D. Here he founded a monastery and planted more than one thousand trees. He then went to Nanking in South China where he resided in the *Che huan sse* (Jetavanavihara). He is said to have met here the great Kashmiri Buddhist Gunavarman, who was at Nanking in 431 A.D. Dharmamitra continued his work of translation from 424 to 441 A.D. He was a great teacher of the doctrine of *dhyana* (meditation) and introduced a number of works on *dhyana* in China. He stayed in Nanking upto 433 A.D. in the Jetavanavihara. He is said to have translated twelve texts. The *Akasagarbhabodhisattva-dharanraisutm is* the only one text available. He subsequently went to North China where he died in the year 442 A.D. at the age of eighty-seven years. Dharmamitra lived a quiet life, teaching the sacred texts to his disciples'.

GUNAVARMAN : All that we know about Gunavarman is based on an able article contributed by the great Sinologist M.Ed. Chavannes to *Toung Pao* in May 1904[68].

Gunavarman was born in a royal family of Kashmir in 366 A.D.[69]. His ancestors were governing the kingdom for a long time, but his grandfather, Haribhadra, was banished from the country on account of oppresive rule. Because of this, his father Sanghananda also had to pass his life in forest as an exile. It is difficult to verify the tradition recorded by Chavannes regarding Gunavarman's connections with a royal family of Kashmir. It is not known to which royal family did he belong. The only independent source available to us is the *Rajatarangini* which, however, makes no mention of Gunavarman.

A story runs about his early age. It is said that one day his mother asked him to kill a fowl. His conscience did not allow him to do so. He objected to his mother on religious grounds. Becoming enraged, his mother told him if he considered that a sin, she would suffer the penalty in his place. One day his finger was burnt and he immediately came to his mother asking her to bear the pain in his place. His mother told him that the pain was in his body and how could she suffer that. So Gunavarman reminded her of her remarks made the other day that she would suffer for his sins. The mother had no answer.

When he was eighteen years old, a prophecy was made about him, according to which it was said that he would govern a kingdom at the age of thirty, would turn towards the South and would be proclaimed venerable.

When he was twenty, he retired from the world, became a *sramana* (monk) and soon mastered all the Buddhist scriptures. He acquired such a deep and profound knowledge in the holy scriptures that he was called, by his contemporaries, the 'Master of Tripitaka'.

When Gunavarman attained the age of thirty, the king of Kashmir died issueless. After a long deliberation, the ministers agreed to invite Gunavarman to ascend the throne as he was descendant of the royal family. When approached by the ministers, Gunavarman declined to accept the offer. Soon he left the kingdom of Kashmir for Ceylon (Simhala). After propagating the *dhamna* in this island, he reached the kingdom of *Cho-P'o*, the island of Java - where he was received by the king warmly.

There runs a story about the conversion of this island by Gunavarman. It is said that one day before Gunavarman's arrival in Java, the mother of the king of that isaind had a dream. In her dream she saw a monk entering the kingdom in a swift boat. Next day when Gunavarman actually arrived there, the king was induced by his mother to welcome the monk and accept the teachings of the Buddha from him. The king also wished that all should obey and respect the monk and there should be no killings and also that gifts should be given to the poor. With such favours, Gunavarman afterwards converted the whole kingdom into Buddhism. Before Gunavarman's arrival, Hinduism was flourishing in Java as was noticed by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien who had visited Java a little earlier on his way back to China from India[70].

By now Gunavarman's fame had spread all over the Buddhist countries. Among other Chinese monks, the attention of Houei-Kouan and Houie-ts'ong was attracted towards him. In the year 424 A.D., they approached the Wen Emperor suggesting him to invite Gunavarman to the territory of Song to spread the religious instructions. Agreeing to their proposal, the Emperor ordered the prefect of Kiao-theou to take necessary actions. Consequently a few Chinese monks were sent to Gunavarman to bring him over to China. When they reached Java, Gunavarman had already embarked on a merchant boat owned by the Hindu merchant Nandi who wanted to go to a small kingdom but the wind took the vessel to Canton. In his own words : "When I was already en route, I was pushed by the wind and

I arrived at the Song territory." Hearing the news of his arrival the Wen Emperor again issued a decree ordering the prefects and governors to send him to the capital.

On his way to the Chinese capital, he passed one year at Che-Hing. He found the mountain Hou-Che resembling Gridhrakuta, so its name was changed to the 'Peak of Vulture'. It is said that the prefect of Che-Hing expressed deepest admiration for Gunavarman. When the former was about to die, Gunavarman went to see him and comforted him by preaching the *Dhamma.*

In the year 431 A.D., Gunavarman arrived at Nanking. The Wen Emperor received him cordially and addressed him thus : "As your disciple, I constantly wish to follow the teachings of Lord Buddha and not to kill. But in the exigency of time, I cannot follow them. Please instruct me, O master, in these matters".

The Emperor arranged his accommodation in the monastery of *Tche-houan* (Jetavanavihara). Homages were brought to him by all distinguished personalities. While residing in this monastery, Gunavarman started preaching the Dhamma and began to explain the *Saddharmapundarika sutra* and the *Dasabhumi sutra.* He was requested by the monk of this monastery, named Houei-Yi, to publish the work entitled - *P'ou-sa chan kie.* Gunavarman published twenty-eight sections of this work and the remaining two sections were done by one of his disciples.

Another monk, named lsvara, was translating a work entitled *Tsa sin.* But he could not finish it due to some difficulties. Gunavarman was requested to complete it. He translated the last thirteen chapters. Hence the whole work comprised twenty-six chapters. His style of writing was perfect and exact.

Organising the *sangha* of the Chinese nuns was one of his remarkable activities. So far Buddhism had not appealed to the Chinese ladies. A movement was set on to organise the *sangha* of Chinese nuns. Gunavarman was requested to make rules for nuns. The nuns of the Ying-Fou monastery prayed him : "It is six years ago that eight nuns of the kingdom of Ceylon came to the capital. In the Song territory there was no nun. Where are the rules for the second assembly (for our observance) to be found?" Gunavarman was willing to give them defences but it was not advisable because they had neither the requisite number nor had they attained the necessary age. They were asked to improve these deficiencies. They were later organised as nuns at their proper age.

Gunavarman died in China at the age of sixty-seven in the year 431 A.D. He had a brilliant career and his was a great contribution in improving the spiritual welfare of the people and propagating Buddhism in China and Java. Besides these activities, he is reported to have translated ten works (mainly on Vinaya) into Chinese. One of these works is the *Bodhisattva-Carya-nirdesa.*[71]

BUDDHAVARMAN : Buddhavarman probably belonged to Kashmir. In Chinese transcription his name is given as *Fou-t'o pomo* and in translation, as *Kio k'ai.* He had specialised in *Vibhasa.* He went to Western China shortly before 433 A.D. and there translated the sixty chapters of the *Mhavibhasa-sastra* between 437 and 439 A.D.[72]

RATNACINTA : In Chinese there is a name *A-mi-chen-na.* The Sanskrit equivalent of this name is Adisena. This is the name of a Kashmiri Buddhist monk who was known as Ratnacinta also. He originally belonged to a royal ksatriya family. He had specialised in *Vinaya.*

He reached Lo-Yang in 693 A.D. and was given accommodation in a monastery, named T'ien-koan sse. He translated seven works between 693 to 706 A.D. He is said to have founded the monastery T'ien-chu sse ('The monastery of India,) in China. He died in China in 721 A.D. at the age of one hundred years. *'Sutra* on counting the good qualities of a rosary' and *'Ekaksharadharani* are amongst many works translated by him into Chineses.[73]

T'IEN-SI-TSAI : T'ien-si-tsai was a monk of Kashmir. His original name is not known. He visited China in 980 A.D. and remained there for twenty years. During all these years he worked hard for the cause of Buddhism. In the year 982 A.D. he received a title of *Ming-Chao Ta-shish,* meaning 'Great Master who Illuminated the religion', from the Emperor for translating of sacred Indian books. He was made in-charge of a committee with other two Indian monks, viz., Fa-tien and Danapala to undertake translation work. Each one of them was asked to translate one work. It was probably due to their activities that the Chinese Buddhist collection was enriched by 201 volumes between the years 982 and 1011 A.D.

During his twenty years' stay in China, T'ien-si-tsai could produce eighteen works of translation. He translated the *Dharmapada* which has various versions in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian. The translation of the *Dasanama-Sutra* and the *Upamitayus-sutra* are also attributed to him.

He died in the year 1000 A.D. A posthumous title *of Hwi-Pien-fa-sh* was conferrred upon him as a mark of honour to his memory.[74]

'MU-LO-SHE-KI' : There are notices of several Indians, preserved in the Chinese Buddhist Encyclopaedia, who visited China during the Song period (960-1979 A.D.). The name of a Kashmiri monk, Mu-lo-she-ki, is also preserved in this Encyclopaedia. He visited China in the year 1005 A.D. and presented Sanskrit manuscripts and Bodhi-tree there.[75]

PRAJNABALA : Prajnabala was a Buddhist monk of Kashmir whose name is given in Chinese partly in transcription and partly in translation as *Pan-jo-li*. He is said to have translated one work (title not known) during the T'ang period (618-907 A.D.) .[76]

III. KASHMIRI BUDDHIST SCHOLARS IN TIBET

DHARMAKARADATTA : According to Tatanatha, Dharamakaradatta lived in Kashmir. He was a contemporary of the Tibetan king Khari-Srori-Ide-btsan (755-797 A.D.). He was a logician and was teacher of Kashmiri Dharmottaracarya. The *Vinayavastu* is the most important work which was translated by Dharmakara alongwith another Kashmiri named Sarvajnadeva, Vidyakaraprabha (of India) and Dpal-gyi-Ihun-Po, (of Tibet).[77]

ANANTA : Ananta was a Kashmiri Pandit who lived in Tibet during the reign of king Khri-Srong-Ide-btsan (802-845 A.D.). The king invited him to translate *Dharma-granthas*. He had acquired full hold on both Sanskrit and Tibetan. When the Indian Acarya Santaraksita was invited to Tibet he did not know Tibetan. It was Ananta who worked as his interpreter. Thus it was through Ananta, the teachings of Acarya Santaraksita were communicated to Tibetans. Annals of Ladakh record that Ananta had become a translator (*lo-ca*) and used to preach about the ten forces, the eighteen "regions" (?) and twelve *nidana*.[78]

JINAMITRA : Jinamitra was a Kashmiri *Vaibhasika* who hailed during 9th century A.D. His teacher was Purnavardhana. The Tibetan king Khri-Srori Ide-bcan Ral-pa-can (821-836 A.D.) invited him to Tibet. The invitation was sent to other teachers also. The purpose of inviting these teachers was to revise old translations in order to introduce into them the uniformity of language so as to make them easy to understand. It was in Tibet that Jinamitra received the pompous title *Aryamulasarvastivada(maha) vinayadhara kasmiravaibhasikacarya.*

Jinamitra translated following works in collaboration with some other distinguished translators:

(a) The texts of the *Dul-va* (Vinaya) :

1. The *Bhiksunipratimoksasutra'*, and
2. The *Bhiksunivinayavibhanga*

(These two works were translated in collaboration with Sarvajnamitra, Vidyakaraprabha, Dharmakara, Dharmasribhadra and with the help of the Tibetan translators, Dpal-Syi Ihun-po, Dpal-brcegs, Klu'i rgyal-mchan and Dpal-'byor).

3. The *Lalitavistara,*
4. The *Karandavyuha,*
5. The *Mahaparinirvanasutra,* and
6. The *Buddhavatamsakasutra.*

(b) The texts of *Prajnaparamita :*

1. *Dasasahasrika,*
2. *Astasahasrika,*
3. The *Sancayagatha,*
4. The *Pancastika,*
5. The *Vajracchedika,* and
6. The *Suvikrantavikramipariprccha*

Jinamitra specially occupied himself in translating the Vinaya section of the *Bstan-'gyur*. The monumental work he translated, with Sarvajnadeva, is the *Vinayasamuccaya.* Their Tibetan assistant in this work was Klu'i rgyal-mchan. With the latter's assistance, Jinamitra also translated the following works of Vinaya:

1. The *Vinayavibhangadivyakhayana* of Vinitadeva,
2. The *Vinayasutra* of Gunaparabha,
3. The *Vinayasutratika* of Dharmamitra, and
4. The *Ekottarakarmasataka* of Gunprabha.

(d) Jinamitra's name is associated with the translation of some Abhidharma texts as well. There works are :

1. The *Prajnaptisastra* of Mahamaudgalyayana,
2. The *Abhidharmakosakarika* ofVasubandhu, and
3. The *Abhidharmakosabhasya* by Vasubandhu.

(e) Jinamitra also collaborated in translating the following works of Madhyamika school:

1. *Sutrasamuccaya* of Nagarjuna,
2. The *Yuktisastikavrtti* of Chandrakirti,
3. The *Siksasamuccaya* of Santideva, and
4. The *Aryavajracchedikaprajnaparamitatika.*

(f) Some works of Vijnanavadin school also were translated by Jinamitra with the help of other translators. The titles of the works are :

1. The *Madhyantavibhanga* of Maitreya and the tika of Vasubandhu and of Sthiramati,
2. The *Aryasandhinirmanabhasya* of Asanga,
3. The *Mahayanasamgraha* of Asanga, and
4. The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* of Asanga with its comments of *bhasya* of Jinaputra and the *vyakhyana.*
5. The *Yogacaryabhumau Vastusamgraha* of Asanga,
6. The *Vimsakarika* of Vasubandhu,
7. The *Pancaskandhabhasya* of Prthivibandhu, and
8. The *Prakaranavimsakatika* of the Kashmiri Vinitadeva.

It is said that, following Asanga, Vasubandhu and Purnavardhana, Jinamitra further expounded the doctrine of Maitreya.

Jinamitra also translated with the help of Tibetan Ye-'ses sde, the *Nyayabindutika* of the Kashmiri Vinitadeva.

At the request of king Khri-Ide Sron bcan, Jinamitra, in collaboration with several other scholars, accomplished the enormous task of compiling an etymological dictionary comprising about 9500 technical expressions. This task was undertaken with a double aim, i.e., to facilitate later translations and to unify the vocabulary.[79]

DANASILA : Danasila was a Kashmiri Buddhist and a contemporary of Jinamitra and Sarvajnadeva. He was also invited to Tibet by king Ral-pa-can. In collaboration with his Kashmiri contemporaries and other translators, Danasila translated the following works :

1. The *Prajnaptisastra* (an Abhidharma text) of Mahamaudgalyayana
2. Two texts of the Madhyamika school :
   (a) The *Yuktisastikavrtti* of Candrakirti and
   (b) The *Siksasamuccaya* of Santideva and the corresponding *krinka.*
3. The texts of the Vijnanavadin school :
   (a) The *Vimsakakarika* of Vasubandhu,
   (b) The *Pancaskandhabhasya* of Prthvibandhu, and
   (c) The *Prakaranavimsakatika* of the Kashmiri Vinitadeva.

Danasila was also one of the scholars who compiled the dictionary referred to above.[80]

SRADDAKARAVARMAN : Sraddakaravarman was amongst the Kashmiri collaborators of the great Tibetan translator, named

Rin-chen-bzam-po (958-1055 A.D.). He was introduced to the system of Buddhajnana under Santipada. He received instruction about the propitiation of Tara according to the method of Ravigupta from Vagisvara. He taught Buddhajnana to Rin-chen-bzem-po and the propitiation of Tara was transmitted by him to Tathagataraksita. Sraddakaravarman is the author of some short works, the longest one being the *Yoganuttaratantrarthavatarasangraha.* Other works are :

(a) Cycle of Sambara:
  1. *Tattvagarbhanama Sadhana,* and
  2. *Herukavisuddhi*

(b) Guhyasamaja cycle (according to the teachings of Nagarjuna)
  1. *Vajrajapatika,* and
  2. *Jnanavajrasamuccayatantrodbhavasaptalankaravimocana.*

(c) Cycle of the Tattvasamgraha :
  1. *Samksiptamandalasutra,* and
  2. *Samksiptamandalasutravrtti*

(d) Cycle of the Sarvarahasya and of the Sarvadurgatiparisodhana :
  1. *Pratisthavidhisanksepa*

(e) Cycle of the Kriyatantra :
  1. *Arcanasadhanavidhi* of the cycle of Manjusri,
  2. *Vajrapanisadhana* of the cycle of Vajrapani.

(f) Text concerning the sacrificial obliations (*bali)*
  1. *Madhyamabhagatrayavidhi.*

(g) Various *Upadesa:*
  1. *Bhagavatyaryatarastotra*

Sraddakaravarman also translated a large number of works 'most important of which were done with the cooperation of Rin-chen bzan-po.[81]

RATNAVAJRA : Ratnavajra was originally a Kashmiri brahmana who became a great Buddhist master. Taranatha relates a story of his patronage according to which he was the son of a brahmana named Haribhadra. The story runs as follows : Once a Kashmiri brahmana appeased Mahesvara. Thus, it was predicted that all his descendents would become renowned scholars. The prophecy came through and amongst this twenty-five descendants the last was Brahmana Haribhadra. This brahmana once entered in a debate with Buddhists having staked his own creed. He was defeated in debate, as a result of which he was converted to Buddhism. Having become a Buddhist, he acquired proficiency in the doctrine. Ratnavajra was son of this converted brahmana.

Ratnavajra was an *upasaka* (a lay disciple). He studied in Kashmir upto the age of thirty under Gangadhara.[82] He learnt by heart the *sutras*, the tantras and all the branches of knowledge. After that he went to Vikramasila for further studies. In Vikramasila he received the title of Fandita from the king and became the central pillar of the University. Among his expositions there, noteworthy works include the Tantrayana, the seven treatises on Pramana, the five works of Maitreya, etc. Ratnavajra returned to Kashmir. He converted many *tirthikas* to the Buddhist faith and established many centres for the study of Vidyasambhara, Sutralankara, Guhyasamaja etc.

From Kashmir, Ratnavajra proceeded to Udyana (Urgyana). It was perhaps here that he converted a Saivaite Kashmiri brahmana, to whom he gave the name Guhyapragna after ordination.

Ratnavajra went to Tho-lin where he assisted in translation of several works and collaborated with the great Tibetan translator Rin-chen-bzan-po. He further visited Central Tibet where he had a chance to supervise the rebuilding of the circular terrace of Bsam-yas, which was burnt in 986 A.D. Ratnavajra supervised five hundred workers including brick-layers, carpenters, goldsmiths, black-smiths and sculptors for three years.

Ratnavajra is believed to have transmitted the *Prasannapada* and the *Madhyamakavatarabhasya* to Parahitabhadra. *Dam-pa Sans-rgyas* (Paramabuddha), a native of Ṣouth India, was instructed in Mahamudra under him. As a logician Ratnavajra composed the Yuktiprayoga, signifying application of reasoning. Other works of Ratnavarja which deal with the Mantrayana are:

(a) Cycle of Buddhasamyoga:
   1. *Srisarvabuddhasamyogadakinijalasambaramahatantra-rajanamamandalopayika.*

(b) Cycle of Cakrasamvara :
   1. *Abhisekavidhikrama,*
   2. *Sricakrasamvaramandalamangalagatha,*
   3. *Sricakrasamvaramandaladevaganastotra,* and
   4. *Sri Cakrasamvarastotra*

(c) Cycle of Guhyasamaja :
   1. *Aksobhyavajrasadhana*

(d) Cycle of Hevajra:
1. *Balikarmakrama,*
2. *Snhevajrastotra,* and
3. *Sarvapapasuddhanagnipujasamadhi*

(e) Cycle of Mahamaya:
1. *Mahamayasadhana,*
2. *Meghalokaganapatisadhana,*
3. *Srinathacaturmukhastotra,*
4. *Mantrarajasamayasiddhisadhana,*
5. *Aryajanbhalastotra,* and
6. *Sricakrasamvaradvayavlrasadhana.*

He also composed *Vajravidaraninamadharanimandalagatha-krama-praknya.* There exist several other works which are reported to have either been composed or translated by Ratnavajra.[83]

JNANASRIBHADRA : Jnanasribhadra or Jnanasri belonged to Kashmir. The *Blue Annals* state that Jnanasri was introduced to the doctrine of Maitreya by Sajjana. According to the same authority, he went to Tibet without having been invited there. He had for his pupil and assistant Phags-pa ses-rab, who belonged to Zans-dkar. Jnanasri played an important role in spreading of logic and of the Abhisamaya in Tibet. In Western Tibet, he accomplished an important task as a translator-interpreter. In the upper valley of the River Spiti, he settled at the monastery of Tabo which was founded by Rin-chen-bzari-po, the great Tibetan scholar. He acquired good knowledge of Tibetan language within three years. Ni-ma ses rab of Gnal, studied under him the Mantrayana for seven years.

Jnanasri is the author of several important works, viz. :

1. The *Aryalankavataravrtti* in seven Parivarta being a commentary on the *Lankavatara-sutra,*
2. The *Pramanaviniscayatika* commentary to the famous treatise of Dharmakirti,
3. The *Aryaprajnaparamitanayasatapancasatakatika,*
4. The *Bhagavatiprajnaparamitahrdayavyakhya,* a commentary to the Hrdayasutra,
5. The *Sutralankarapindartha,*
6. The *Karyakaranabhavasiddhi,* and
7. *Aryamanjughosastuti duskarmavisesapravartananayamala.*

He is reported to have composed some minor Tantric texts also. Jnanasri translated, with 'Phags-pa-ses-rab, the *Mulatantrasan-*

grahahrdayabhidanottaratantramulavrtti of Suramgamavajra. In co-operation with Choskyi brcon-yrus, he translated his *Pramanaviniscayatika* and *Sutralankarapindartha.* With Rab-zi bses-gnen of Cog-gru, he translated the *Vajravidaranisadhana* of the Kashmiri Gangadhara and connected texts edited by Manivajra and himself. Jnanasri together with Rab-zi bses gnen and Blo-gros snin-po, put into Tibetan the *Silasamvarasamayavarodha.* With the assistance of Rgyal-ba ses-rab and Sa-kya bses-gnen, he corrected the Tibetan version of the *Vinayasamgraha* and, with the help of Dge-va'i blogros, he translated the *Vadanyayaprakarana.*[84]

JANARDANA : Janardana was another Kashmiri collaborator of Rin-chen bzam-po referred to above. He also collaborated with Sakhya blo-gros. In Tibet, he received the title of *Kha-che pan-chen* (Kasirapandita) and *Upadhyaya* (grammarian).

With Rin-chen-bzan-po, he translated the following works:

1. *Astangahrdayasamhita* of Vagbhata,
2. *Astangahrdayavivrtti* of Candranandana (a Kashmiri medical doctor of 10th century),
3. *Pratimoksabhasya,* commentary of the *Pratimoksamulagama* entitled *Asampramusitasmaranamatralekha* (from an unknown author).
4. *Tattvasarasangraha* of Dharmendra.

Together both translated some short texts including some hymns and their commentaries.

In collaboration with Sakhya blo-gras, Janardana translated first 32 Jatakas of the *Jatakamala* of Arya Sura and *Udanavargavivarana* of Prajnavarman.[85]

LAKSMI : Kashmir has produced a great nun named Laksmi. She is known in Tibetan as dge-slon-ma Dpal-mo. She taught *Anuttaratantra* to Karopa, the disciple of Maitripa (born 1007 or 1010 A.D.). She had been personally blessed byAryaAvalokitesvara (the great compassionate one) and preached the ritual of propitiating AryaAvalokitesvara by performing the rite of fasting. She taught it to the Pandita Ye-ses bzan-po (Jnanabhadra). His name is found at the top of the lineage of the 'detailed exposition' of the cycle of Mahakarunika. In this lineage she is seen to have imparted this exposition to dpal-gyi bzan-po (Sribhadra) .

This great nun is the author of some works as well. In *Bstan-gyur* there exists a *Pancakramatika,* entitled *Kramarthaprakasika,* which is attributed to her. There exist some texts dedicated to

Avalokitesvara which according to the colophone are the compositions of the Bhiksuni Laksmi. These include :

1. The *Lokesvarastotra,*
2. The *Ekadasamukhavalokitesvarasya,*
3. The *Aryavalokitesvarasya stotra,*
4. The *Aryavalokitesvarastotra,* and
5. The *Mahakarunikastotra.*[86]

SUBHUTISRISANTI : Subhutisrisanti was known in Tibet as Kha-Che-Pan-Chen (a great Pandita of Kashmir). This learned scholar of Kashmir was invited to Tibet by *Iha-bla-ma* (royal monk) Ye-ses-'od, (11th century A.D.) the king of Western Tibet (the grandson of Ni-ma-mgon who himself was the great grandson of Glan-Dar-rna).

Subhutisri translated in Tibet many sutras and sastras of the *Prajnaparamita* class, viz, *Astasahasrika,* its great commentary the *Abhisamayalankaraloka* and the *Abhisamayalankaratika.* According to Cordier's catalogue, Subhutisri further translated, with the assistance of Sakya blo-gros, the *Sarothma,* the Panjika of the *Abhisamayalankara* (edited by the Mahapandita Rajacarya Ratnakarasanti). With the assistance of Dge-ba't blo-gros, he translated Suddhimati, the Panjika of the *Astasahasrika.* Subhutisri has also translated the *Prajnaparamitabhavanopadesa.*

In collaboration with Dge-ba'i blo-gros, Subhutisri translated some important works on logic which were undertaken at the order of Byam-Chub'od (the king of Western Tibet). These works include:

1. The *Pramanavarttikavrtti* being a self commentary on *Pramanavarttika* by Devendrabuddhi.
2. The *Pramanavarttikatika* by Sakyabuddhi. and
3. The *Pramanavarttikatika.*
4. The *Manjusrivajrasadhana*, a tantric text.

With Tin-ne jin bzan-Po, Subhutisri corrected the Tibetan translation of *Sambandhapariksaprakarana* and translated :

1. *Yuktiprayoga* of the Kashmiri Ratnavajra,
2. The *Sahajaratisamyoga,* and
3. The *Sricakrasamvaradvayawrasadhana* of Ratnavajra.

With the same collaborator, Subhutisri translated some works of the Kalacakra cycle, viz., The *Laksabhidhanoddhrta laghutantrapindarthavarna* and *Sadangayoga*. Both the works are attributed to the Boddhisattva Vajrapani.

Subhutisri also corrected the translation of the *Hevajrapindarthatika* done by Maitri-Pa and Ses-rab grags-pa.[87]

SOMANATHA : Somanatha, well-known Buddhist preacher of 11th century, according to the *Blue Annals,* belonged to a brahmana family of Kashmir. He aptly followed his father's doctrine during his very young age. His mother introduced him to Buddhism. He studied under a Kashmiri brahmana scholar, named bzan-Po (Bhadra) or Suryaketu (Ni-ma rgyal-mtshan). Other co-mates of Somanatha were Pandita Sonasati, Laksmikara, Danasri, Candrarahula, etc. When all were studying under Suryaketu, Pandita Vinayakaramati sent to them *Sekoddesa* and *Sekaprakriya.* All were filled with wonder after reading them. But the effect was particularly apparent on Somanatha; at once he discontinued his studies in Kashmir and proceeded in search of a capable teacher who could teach him the Kalacakra system. Reaching Magadha he met (Dus-'Khorba) Kalacakrapada, the junior, who instructed him in the system. Thus, he accomplished the study of the complete commentary of the Kalacakra. He obtained scholarship over the Tantra itself alongwith its precepts and the initiation rite. He intended to spread the system in Tibet, and when he reached Tibet the native people made provisions for him and subsidised his translation work as well. He completed the translation of Kalacakra within one year. Many Tibetan translators *(lo-ca-ba)* and scholars invited Somanatha to their residence in order to receive instructions from him. Somanatha is said to have returned to India for a short visit to remove his doubts from his teachers and initiators concerning the Kalacakra.

When Somanatha arrived in Tibet for the second time, Kalyanamitra Dkon-mchog-brun of Phan yul and his disciple attended on him for a considerable time and thus pleased him. He, in his turn, bestowed on them the explanation of the Tantra and its commentary *(Vimalaprabha).* He specially bestowed on them the precepts which had not been given to other Tibetan scholars. Thus was proceeded further the system in Tibet through Kalyanamitra of Phan yul and his disciple.

Besides Kalacakra, Somanatha preached the secret meaning of the Pradipodyatana in Tibet and taught *Prajnanamamulamadhyamakakarika* to rtse-ba ses-rab. Having mastered Tibetan language also, he translated Sriparamarthaseva of Jnanavajra, perhaps without the help of an interpreter.

Somanatha also translated many important texts dealing with Kalacakra with the assistance of the ses-rab grags; these include :

1. The *Paramadibuddhoddhrtasri Kalacakranamatantraraja.*
2. The *Vimalaprabhanama mulatantranusarini dvadasasahasrika laghukalacakratantrarajatika.* (The Sanskrit text of this work is preserved in manuscript form in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal).
3. The *Padmininamapanjika* of Kalacakrapada.
4. The *Sekoddesa,*
5. The *Sekoddesatika,*
6. The *Srinaksatramandalasadhana ekadasanga nama of* Kalacakrapada,
7. The *Tattvagarbha-sadhana* attributed to Vajrapani (belonging to Sambara cycle).
8. The *Tattvaloka* attributed to Lokanatha (belonging to the Hevajra cycle),
9. The *Sekapmkriya* (dealing with the ritual of initiation),
10. The *Kalacakrapadasampradaya,*
11. The Triyogahrdayavyakarana of *Manjughosakirti,* and
12. The *Sahajasiddhi.*[88]

MAHAJANA : Mahajana was son of the great Kashmiri Buddhist master *Ratnavajra.*[89] He worked as a collaborator with Marpa, (Lama of Tibet) and authored the *Prajnaparamitahrdayarthparijnana,* being a commentary on the *Prajnaparamitahrdayasutra.* With the help of Tibetan translator, named Sen-ge rgyal-mchan, he translated his own works and a treatise of Vijnanavada, i.e., the *Dharmadharmatavibhangakarika* attributed to Maitreya. He translated the *vrtti* of this text by Vasubandhu in collaboration with Blo-dan ses-rab. He also translated three works of his father, Ratnavajra, viz,.

1. The *Sricakrasamvaramandaladevaganastotra,*
2. The *Sricakrasamvarastotra,* and
3. *Aryajambhalastotra.*

He also translated a letter of his son Sajjana[90] which the latter had written to his son Suksamajana.[91] With the assistance of Gzon-nu'od, Mahajana translated majority of works connected with the *Namasangitiyogatantra,* viz. :

1. *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitisadhana,*
2. *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitimandalpayika.*
3. *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitisarvamandalastotra,*
4. *Vimsatyakarabhisamabhikramena bhagavanmanjusrisadhana,*
5. *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitinamavrtti,* and
6. *Aryamanjusrimandalaviddhi cintamaninama.*

Two more works which he translated with the help of Gzon-nu'd, include :

1. *Aryamayajalakramena tarabhattarikasadhana,* and
2. *Sadaksaratantrakramena mandalacakropadesasadhana.*

Mahajana also translated the Vinaya text, the *Sramanerasiksapadasutra* of Kalyanamitra, in collaboration with the Tibetan interpreter, Gzon-nu-mchog.[92]

SUKSMAJANA : Suksmajana was the son of Sajjana. He was the last Kashmiri in the line of great Buddhist preceptors commencing from Ratnavajra.[93] He collaborated with the great Tibetan translator Ni-ma-grags and together they accomplished the interpretation of the Bodhisattvayogacaryacatuhsatakarika attributed to Aryadeva and its *tika* by Candrakirti.[94]

PARAHITABHADRA : Parahitabhadra, a Kashmir Buddhist master, is known in Tibetan as Gzan-la phan-bzan-po. He was a pupil of Mahapandita Somasri[95] of Kashmir. Under Ratnavajra, he studied the *Prasannapada* and the *Madhyamakavatarabhasya.* These two treatises he himself confided to his students — Mahasumati of Kashmir and the great Tibetan translator Ni-ma-grags of Pa-cheb. To the latter goes the credit of introducing these treatises in Tibet. Another great Tibetan translator of the nobel family of Rnog, named Blo- lban ses-rab, while in Kashmir studied under Parahita also. Parahita collaborated with several well-known Tibetan interpreters. For instance, he collaborated with the Phags-pa ses-rab, who was a pupil and assistant of Jnanasribhadra and with another famous interpreter ses-rab rgyal-mchan, who assisted Atisa as well.

Parahita performed many activities at Tho-lin in Western Tibet also, where he collaborated with Gzon-nu mchog and Dge'-bardo-rje. Parahita is also famous as a great logician but there exists only one work on logic translated by him, i.e., the *Sambandhapariksanusara.* Interesting himself in other spheres, Parahita composed a short text on ritual, the *Mandalabhisekavidhi.* He also composed two philsophical commentaries, viz. :

1. The *Sunyatasaptativivrtti,* and
2. The *Sutralankaradislokadvayakhyana,* being a commentary on the two initial *slokas* of the *Mahayanasutralankara.* In association with the interpreter Phags-pa ses-rab, he translated two texts of Sambara series. These are :

1. The *Pindarthaprakasika,* and
2. *Yoginisancaryatantranibandha padarthaprakasanama* by Viravajra.

At Tho-lin, he is said to have translated his own writings in association with Gzon-nu mchog and many other works with ses-rab rgyal-mchan.[96]

BHAVYARAJA : Bhavyaraja was a Buddhist logician of Kashmir. He was the principal collaborator of Blo-ldan sesrab. With this great translator, he interpreted texts on logic at Cakradhara (near modern town of Bijbihara in Kashmir) and at the Ratnarasmivihara at Grori-khyer dpe-med (Anupamapura).

Together they translated two works of Dharmottara, viz., the *Apohaprakarana* and the *Ksanabhangasiddhi* and also the *Pratibandhasiddhi* of Sankarananda. Both re-arranged the interpretation of the *Pramanavarttikakarika* which was earlier done by Subhutisrisanti and Dge-ba'i blo-gros. At Cakradhara, they translated the Pramanavarttikalankara of Prajnakaragupta. For this enormous enterprise Bhavyaraja received the title *-dpal-ldan kha-che' i rigs-pa yigcng-gi nor-bu skal-Idan rgyal-po (srimat kasmiranyayacudamani bhavyaraja*).[97]

KUMARASRI : Kumarasri was a learned scholar. The revision of the translation of the *Pramanavarttikalankara* of Prajnakaragupta was accomplished under the control of Kumarasri along with another Kashmiri named Sunayasri. They were helped by the Pandits arriving from Vikramasila and it was done in the presence of masters from Dbus, from Gcari, from Ru-bzi, from Khams, from Mna-ris and from China. The place where these activities were performed was Tho-lin in Western Tibet at the Vihara of Dpal Dpe-med lhun-gyis grubpa (Sri Anupamanirabhogavihara).[98]

TILAKAKALASA : Tilakakalasa or Tilakalasa is known in Tibetan as *Thig-le bum-pa*. The name is sometimes rendered as Bindukalasa as well as. He occupied himself mostly in the *Madhyamika* philosophy, and composed four *hymns*. He collaborated with *Ni-ma grags* and *Blo-ldbàn ses-rab.*

Before going to Tibet, he translated in Kashmir, with *Ni-ma grags* the *Madhyamakavatara* of *Candrakirti* and the self-commentary in 3550 *slokas*. Together, both rearranged the translation of the *Madhyamakavatarakarika* done by Krsnapada and Chul-khrims rgyal-pa. They also translated *Sriguhyasamajamandalopayikavimsavidhi* of Nagabodhi. The work is attached to the school of the Guhyasamaja of Nagarjuna.

In collaboration with Blo-ldan ses-rab, Tilakakalasa reviewed the interpretation of the Siksasamuccaya of Santideva done by

Danasila, Jinamitra, and Ye-ses-sde during the 9th century. Together they also translated two texts dealing with the Prajnaparamita ('Perfection of Wisdom') in 8000 stanzas. The texts include : the *Aryaprajnaparamitasamgrahakarika* of Degnaga, also known as the *Astasahasrikapindartha,* and its commentry in 540 *slokas* by Triratnadasa.

He also translated the following fifteen hymns :

1. The *Vagisvarastotra,*
2. The *Aryamanjusristotra,*
3. The *Aryavagisvarastotra,*
4. The *Lokesvarasimhanada nama stotra,*
5. *Prajnaparamitastotra,*
6. *Acintyastava,*
7. *Stutyatitastava,*
8. *Niruttarastava,*
9. *Aryabhattarkamanjusriparmarhastuti,*
10. *Aryamanjusribhattarakakarunastotra,*
11. *Astamahasthanacaityastotra*
12. *Astamahasthanacaityastotra,*
13. *Dvadasakaranayastotra,*
14. *Vandanastotra*, and
15. *Narakoddhara.*

Of these, the first four are attributed to Tilakakalasa himself and the rest to Nagarjuna.[99]

KANAKAVARMAN : Kanakavarman was a Kashmiri *bhiksu* who is known through his works on Madhyamika philosophy and *Prajnaparamitasastra.* He collaborated with Rin-chen-bzan po (958-1055 A.D.) in Tibet in translating the *Srisarvadurgatiparisodhana-pretahomavidhi* of Anandagarbha. At Lhasa he translated in collaboration with Ni-ma-grags, the *Sragdharastotra* of Sarvajnamitra and both corrected the following important translations in the vihara of Ra-mo-che at Lhasa :

1. *Prasannapada* of Candrakirti.
2. *Madhyamavatara* of Candrakrti, and
3. *Bodhicittavivarna* of Nagarjuna

Kanakavarman stayed in the Pu-rans situated 'on the slopes of the Ri-bo chen-po-spos-kyi nd Idan-ba' (i.e., Gandhamadanamahagiri), where he translated the commentary of the *Abhidharmakosa,* the *Laksananusarini* by Purnavardhana. This most considerable task was accomplished in the company of Ni-ma-grags. Kanakavarman translated the *Pramanasamuccya* of Dignaga, in collaboration with Dad pa'i ses-rab, and thus ranking among the interpreters of logic too. The other works translated by him in collaboration with Ni-ma-grags include:

1. *Rajaparikatha ratnavali,*
2. *Pratisthavidhisamksepao* of Sradhakaravarman, and
3. *Ratnasukosa* of Nagarjunagarbha (text presented as madhyamika).

Lastly, Kanakavarman collaborated with Chos- 'bar (1044-1089 A.D.) and together both made the Tibetan version of *Cittapariksa* of Aryasila.[100]

JAYANANDA : Jayananda a native of Kashmir was another amongst the assistants of the great Tibetan translator Ni-ma grags. His name and career are constantly associated with that of the Tibetan translator of Khu named Mdo-Sde'bar (1070-1141 A.D.).

The *Blue Annals* record that he was a reincarnation of the king Sron-bcan sgam-Po and disciple of Kalacakrapada, junior. He was also known, in Tibet, as the *Kha-Che Panchen* (great Kashmiri pandita).

Jayananda mostly occupied himself with the Madhyamika philosophy especially on the *Madhyamakavatara* of Candrakirti. He edited a *tika* of it i.e. the *Arthaprakasika.* He further translated this *tika* into Tibetan in the company of Kun-dge'grags at the vihara of Khyad-par-mkhar-sku, in Chan-Si. Another work dealing with the Madhyamika philosophy, composed and translated by him is the *Tarkamudgarakarika.* A commentary on it was edited by a student of Jayananda, named Ram-Bya Byan-Chub ye-Ses, alongwith Khu-Ston and a great specialist on Madhyamika philosophy.

Jayananda translated the *Sutrasamuccaya* of Atisa in collaboration with Ni-ma-grags and Mdo-Sde' bar. He is reported to have translated some work of Nagarjuna as well.[101]

KUMARAPRAJNA : Kumaraprajna was a monk of Kashmir who worked as an assistant ofJayananda in the beginning of 12th century(A.D.). He was the copyist of the *Sutrasamuccayaparikatha* and translated the *Aksaradisataka* and its *vrtti* at Gron Khyer dye-med (Aupamapura).[102]

GUNAKARASRiBHADRA : Gunakarasribhadra was a Kashmiri Buddhist belonging to a monastery of Gron-Khyer dpe-mad (Anupamapura). He had the honour of being the teacher *(guru)* of Iha bla-ma zi-ba'od (a king of Western Tibet, 11th-12th century A.D.) With his royal pupil, he translated a text of *hetuvidya,* the *Tattvasangrahakarika* of Santiraksita. He translated the *Boddhicittavivarna* of Nagarjuna in collaboration with Rab-zi h'ses-gnen of Cog-gru.[103]

SUGATASRI : Sugatasri was a Kashmiri Pandit who was invited by a scholar of gNags to Yar-Kluns (in Tibet). He became a teacher of a native of mNa'-ris named Byan-Chub-dge-myes (born in 1084 A.D.). Sugatasri taught him the *Prajnaparamita* and also the five treatises of the Bhattaraka Maitreya.

Sugatasri, in co-operation with Kun-dga 'rgyal-mchan, translated *Mahatmakirtidhvajastotra* and with Khro-Phu, he translated the *Svapnataropayika* of *Condramitra.* He also translated *Aryamanjusrinamasamgitivrttiamrt abindupratalokanama.*[104]

SAKYASRIBHADRA : Sakyasribhadra[105] was last of the Kashmiri scholars who acquired great fame in Buddhist learning. He was born in 1127 A.D. He went to Vikramasila for his studies where he became the student of Subhakara. According to Rahul Sankrtyayana[106], he received initiation *(diksa)* at the hands of Sukhasri and studied under many teachers viz., Ravigupta, Chandragupta, Vikhyatadeva, Vinayasri, Abhayakirti and Ravisrijnana. He became a great scholar of his time and received the honour of becoming the teacher of the king of Magadha. He was appointed to the highest post of the Vikramasila mahavihara.

It was after the raid of Muhammad ibn-Bakhtyar (about 1197 A.D.) who destroyed the two great universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila, that Sakyasribhadra went to Jagaddala (Bengal) and stayed there for three years. But on the fall of that state also, Sakyasri went to Nepal. In Nepal, he lived with nine Pandits, such as Pandit Vibhuticandra and Danasila of Jagaddala; Sarighasri of Nepal; and Sugatasri, etc. The Tibetan scholar called Khro-Phu, who later wrote a biography of Sakyasri, also met him in Nepal. It was at the request of Khro-phu that Sakyasri went to Tibet in 1200 A.D. According to Rahul Sankrtyayana[107] and the *Blue Annals*[105] he lived in Tibet for ten years. He worked intensively with Tibetan scholars and travelled about in order to visit some monasteries. He was simply known as Kha-Che Pan-Chen- the great Pandit from Kashmir in Tibet. He had a considerable disciplinary importance in introducing the third tradition (of the Vinaya) in Tibet. Among his students noteworthy are : Sa-Skya-Pan-Chen (the great Pandita of Sa-Skya) named Kun-dga 'rgyal-mchan (1182-1251 A.D.); Byari-chab dpal (1196-1331 A.D.) and

Chos-rje dpal (1196-1264A.D.). In the monastery of Sa-Sky, Sakyasri functioned as the superior of the monastery. He worked extensively particularly with Khro-Phu with whose assistance he did a majority of his translations. Sakyasri translated majority of his own writings and also some other minor works. Some works which he translated include :

1. *Vajrapadasarasamgrahapanjika* of Naropa,
2. The *Yuganandhapaprakasa namasekaprakritya* of Rahulasrimitra,
3. The *Srimanjuvajradikramabhisamaysamuccya nispannayogavali nama* of Abhayakaragupta.

Sakyasri also corrected translations of some works viz.,

1. *Srisamputatantrajatika amnyamanjari nama* of Abhayakaragupta done by Buddharkirti, and
2. The *Pramanavartikakarika* of Dharmakirti.

Nostalgia for his native province made Sakyasri to come back to Kashmir where he died in 1225 A.D. at the age of 98 years. He did his best to restore the waning faith in the valley as is indicated from the following quotation cited by Jean Naudou.[109] : "Although the doctrine was being spread in Kashmir, the monks were very few. The master of the Law that is (to say, Sakyasri) increased the number of the monks and the *sutra*. The king, who had become a heretic, was re-established in the doctrine, the Mahapandita restored the vihara and the ruined statues".

Sakyasri is only an author of minor texts. His activities mostly deal with the Kalacakra, the Namasangiti and the cult of Tara. As stated in the *Blue Annals* (p.760) his name occurs in the fourth lineage of the Kalacakra. Same authority quotes (p.35) : "the prophecy of Tara to Sakyasri about his becoming the Buddha Bhagirathi of the Bhadrakalpa (i.e., one of the thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa)". He was the last Indian to transmit the ritual of Tara expounded by Ravigupta and he was the last also in transmission of the Pramanavartika. His works include :

(a) Cycle of the Kalacakra :
  1. *Srikalacakragananopadesa,*
  2. *Srikalacakragananopadesa,*
  3. *Pancagrahapratijnanopadesa,*
  4. *Pancagrahapratigananopadesa,* and
  5. *Vajrapadagarbhasanigraha panjika.*

(b) Cycle of the Tara :
  1. *Aryatarabhattarikopadesasrayasanamaranamnaya,* and
  2. *Aryatarasadhana.*

(c) Cycle of Avalokitesvara:
  1. *Simhanadroksacakra,*
  2. *Samksiptamoghapasasadhana,*
  3. *Amoghapasabalividhi,* and
  4. *Aryamoghapasaposadhavidhyamnaya.*

(d) Cycle of the Utpadanakrama :
  1. *Visuddharcanacaryopadesa.*

(e) Cycle of Namasaingiti:
  1. *Namasamgitivacanopadesa.*

(f) Cycle of Manjusri :
  1. *Manjusrikalacakra.*

(g) Cycle of Maitreya:
  1. *Aryamaitreyasadhana.*

(h) Cycle of Jambhala:
  1. *Aryakrsnajambhalasadhana.*

(i) Other texts:
  1. *Mandalavidhi,*
  2. *Saptangasaddharmacaryavatara,*
  3. *Bodhisattvamargakramasamgraha,*
  4. *Mahayanopadesagatha,* and
  5. *Kalapujamahacatuskakarika* (a hymn).

SARVAJNASRIRAKSITA : Sarvajnasriraksita is known in Tibetan as Thans-Cad mkhyen dpal bsrun-ba. He belonged to Kashmir and worked at Sa-Skya monastery in Western Tibet. He translated the *Nyayapravesa nama Pramanaprakarana* in collaboration with the Grags-pa rgyal-mchan dpal bzan-Po, probably the fifth descendent of Sa-Skya (1147-1216 A.D.)[110].

VIMALASRIBHADRA : Vimalasribhadra was a Kashmiri Buddhist who lived in the 14th century (A.D.). He is the author of following works :

1. *Pancasikatippani,*
2. *Kulalokesvarabhyavanakrama,*
3. *Anujnaptikriyakrama,* and
4. *Paramagurupunyasrinamastotra.*

He also translated some works into Tibetan with a famous interpreter called Blo-gros brtan Pa, who received the title of *Skad-gnis smra-ba'i dban-Po* (the prince of interpreters). He translated the *Suvisadasamputa* attributed to Tankadasa. This work is an important commentary of the *Hevajratantra.* With the same collaborator, he translated two of his own works, viz., the *Kulalokesvara bhavanakrama* and the *Anujnaptikriyakrama.* With another interpreter of Yar-Kluns, called Brcon grus gzon-nu, he translated the *Pancasikatippani.*[111]

DHARMADHARA : Dharmadhara was a Kashmiri who, in collaboration with Grags-Fa rgyal-mchan of Yar-Kluns who was a pupil of 'Ses-rab-sen-get (1251-1325 A.D.,) translated the following works :

1. *Sekoddesattka* of Naropa
2. *Kulalokanathasadhanaloka* of Mahiman,
3. *Jambhalastotra* attributed to Vikramaditya,
4. *Sambuddhabhasitapratimaloka samavivarna,*
5. *Pratimalaksana* of the Mahasri Atreya, and
6. *Samudrika nama tanulaksanapariksa* of Narada[112].

SUMANASRI : Sumanasri was a Kashmiri Pandita who expounded the cycle of Padmajala to the great Tibetan scholar Bu-ston (1290-1364 A.D.), with whom he translated the following works:

1. The *Padmajalodbhavasadhana.*
2. The *Padmavalokitesvarasya Padmajalakramena bhagavan mandalapujavidhi,*
3. *Navasloka* of Kambalapada, and
4. *Aryasaptaslokika bhagavatiprajnaparamitanama sutra*[113].

IV. SOME PROMINENT BUDDHIST SCHOLARS WHO STUDIED/WORKED IN KASHMIR

NAGARJUNA : In the history of Buddhism Nagarjuna as a Buddhist phi- losopher has few equals. At the same time there has hardly been another personality so elusive as his.[114] The mystification and story building around his name and personality have attained sky high proportions so much so that eminent scholars like Max Walleser have questioned even the existence of Nagarjuna.[115]

Nagarjuna, it is believed, was born in South India in a brahmana family, but played a very prominent role in the development of Buddhism in Kashmir. Kalhana mentions the name of Nagarjuna who resided at Sadarhatvana the modern Harwan around 150 years after the Buddha attained complete beautitude[116]. According to Yuan Chwang, Nagarjuna was a contemporary of Asvaghosa[117] who himself was a comtemporary of Kaniska. Kalhana also believes that he was a contemporary of Huska, Juska and Kaniska[118]. Ramanan, after considering many corroborating evidences, believes that the upper and lower limits of the philosophical activity of Nagarjuna lay somewhere between 50 and l20 A.D.[119].

The Chinese sources differ from the Tibetan on the question of what led Nagarjuna to the Buddhist order. As per Tibetan accounts, he lived and studied Buddhist texts that were available to him; and not satisfied with them, he wandered in search of other texts[120]. The prevailing tradition, which he could readily obtain, was presumably Sarvastivada and Nagarjuna's deep study of it is beyond doubt. This is amply borne out by has penetrating understanding and searching criticism of this school in his *Madhyamaka Karika*[121]. Further, all the accounts speak of his having obtained the *Prajnaparamitasutra* (Kumarjiva's *Vaipulya sutra)* from a naga[122] and these texts satisfied so deeply his quest for "other teachings" of the Buddha that he devoted his whole life to teach and propagate the profound truths contained in them[123]. The fact that Nagarjuna studied deeply the texts belonging to Sarvastivada school, which flourished in North-Western India, particularly in Kashmir, apparently points to his visiting Kashmir for study. Also, nagas were the first inhabitants who were initiated to Buddhism in Kashmir by the monk Madhyantika[124]. The report that Nagarjuna received the *Prajnaparamitasutra* from a Mahanaga amply shows his close contact with Kashmir.

The works that can be attributed to Nagarjuna, according to Venkata Ramanan[125], may be classified into these broad catagories:

(a) Texts that constitute chiefly a critical examination of other schools especially of the Sarvastivada doctrine of elements :
   1. *Madhyamakasastra (Madhyamaka-karika).*
   2. *Vigrahavyavartani,*
   3. *Ekasloka-sastra* and
   4. *Dvadasamukha-sastra,*
   5. *Sunyatasaptati* also perhaps belongs to this class.

(b) Texts chiefly expository:
   1. *Pratityasamutpata-hrdaya-sastra* is an exposition of the twelve linked chain of the course of phenomental existence, which consitutes the subject matter of *karika* xxvi.

2. *Yukti-sastika* is a short compendium on the basic tenets of Mahayana.
3. *Bodhisattva-Patheya-sastra* is a short exposition of the factors of the Great Way.

(c) Commentaries or/and Records of Oral Instruction *(upadesa)* :
1. *Mahaprajnaparamita-sastra,* and
2. *Dasabhumi-vibhasa-sastra* are the two important works that belong to this class,
3. *Bhavasankranti-sastra,* and
4. *Aryadharmadhatu-garbha-vivarana* also perhaps belongs here,
5. Perhaps *Vaidalya* which has a *sutra* and a *prakarana* also belong here.

(d) Devotional verses:
1. *Niraupamya-stava,*
2. *Lokatika-stava,*
3. *Acintya-stava,*
4. *Stutyatika-stava,*
5. *Paramartha-stava,* and
6. *Dharmadhatu-stava.*

(e) Letters:
1. *Suhrllekha,* and
2. *Ratnavali.*

(f) To these there can perhaps be added the collection of *Sutras (Sutrasamuccaya)* on the authority of Santideva's *Bodhicaryavatara:* the work is, however, not extant.

(g) *Chittasantosa trimsika* and *Paramarcanatrimsika*[126] also, are attributed to Nagarjuna. These *trimsikas* indicate deep influence of Saiva philosophy on him, and a further proof of his close contact with Kashmir.

KUMARAJIVA : Celebrated Buddhist scholar Kumarajiva's biography is preserved in a Chinese work called *Kao Seng tehoam* (ch.II.), which was compiled in 519 A.D. The other Chinese sources which also furnish life accounts of Kumarajiva are *Tch'ou san tsang ki si,* compiled in 520 A.D.[127] and *Ciu-mo-lo-shi* of uncertain date.[128]

Kumarajiva's father Kumarayana *(Kiu-mo-yen),* native of Kashmir, exercised the rights of hereditary ministers in an Indian state. Renouncing his claim to ministership, Kumarayana became a Buddhist monk. He left India for Kucha in Central Asia and was received well by the king. The latter requested him to be his *Rajaguru.*

Attaining the position of a royal preceptor, king's sister named Jiva fell in love with him and married him. A son was born to them at Karashahr in 344 A.D., who was named Kumarajiva, combining the names of his parents. Soon after Kumarajiva's birth his mother Jiva was converted to Buddhism. She turned a nun taking herself the responsibility of her son's up-bringing.

Kumarajiva was brought to Kashmir at the age of nine to gain a through grounding in Buddhist literature and philosophy. In Kashmir, Kumarajiva was entrusted to a Sarvastivadin scholar Baridhudatta (*Pan-teon-ta- to)*. Kumarajiva learnt *Madhyama-agama* and *Dirgha-agama* under his learned teacher. After three years stay in Kashmir, Kumarajiva returned to Kucha with his mother, Kumarajiva's intellegence and manner won him many admirers among his friends and teachers and it is said that on Kumarajiva's departure, many Kashmiri scholars accompanied him to Kucha. On the way he visited several centres of Buddhist studies in Central Asia. While on their journey to Kucha, Kumarajiva and his mother met an *arhat* who predicted a great future for Kumarajiva. The *arhat* prophesied if the mother guarded her son against the temptations of youth and if he remained blameless till his age of thirty-five years, one day he would be able to propagate the doctrine of the Buddha among the common masses and thus bring them salvation. In Kashgar, en route Kucha he studied the *Abhidharma* with six *Padas.* It was here that he was introduced by Suryasoma (Suryasena) to the Mahayana doctrine (Suryasena was the propagator of Nagarjuna's theory in Kashmir) [129] Kumarajiva made a special study of the Madhyamika treatises. The king of Kashgar wanted to retain him in his court but the Kuchean king sent messengers asking him to return. So Kumarajiva was constrained to return and was welcomed by the king personally in Kucha.

At the age of twenty, Kumarajiva received regular ordination living in the new convent of the Kuchean king. A Kashmiri *Vinaya* master, Vimalaksa, who travalled from Kashmir to Kucha and thence to China introduced him to *Sarvastivada Vinaya.* He studied the *Vinaya in* ten sections in Kucha. Hence Kumarajiva acquired great proficiency in all branches of the Buddhist learning and his fame spread far and wide. Buddhists from Khotan, Kashgar, Yarkand and other parts of Eastern Turkestan were attracted towards him.

While Kumarajiva was in Kucha, Ku-K'ien—the Chinese emperor of the former tsin dynasty, sent an envoy to request Kuchean king to send Kumarajiva to China. The king refused to send the pious monk. So the Chinese emperor sent his general Lu-kuang to subdue Kucha. Kuchean king was defeated and Kumarajiva was taken as prisoner to China. Kumarajiva was already known to Chinese people. He was brought to Chinese capital Ch'ang-ngan in 401 A.D. where he was welcomed by the Chinese Emperor Yao Hhin of the second tsin dynasty. The Chinese Emperor made him his *Rajaguru* and requested him to propagate the Buddhist faith in his empire. Kumarajiva organised a translation bureau where the Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese language. To the bureau eight hundred scholars were attached and a marvellous work of translation was accomplished under Kumarajiva headship. Being himself an ardent follower of the new faith, the king held in his hands the original texts as the work of translation was going on. It is reported that under Kumarajiva's supervision more than three hundred volumes (works) were translated and Nanjio's catalogue attributes forty-nine works to Kumarajiva.

Kumarajiva is found at his best in his translations. He was a man of genius and had command over both the languages i.e., Sanskrit as well as Chinese. He wrote Chinese in a new charming style of his own. His style is considered more beautiful and charming than that of the great Chinese writer Yuan Chwang. Besides a large number of translation works, two original works, viz., 'a treatise on *'tattva"* in two chapters and a commentary on *'Vimalaktrti Sutra* are attributed to Kumarajiva. Throughout his stay in China he continued his devotion towards the propagation of Buddhism with his deep knowledge of Buddhist philosophy and its various schools. His activities could work a revolution in the Buddhist religion and literature in China. He had a large following among the Chinese Buddhists. Some of these became famous authors of Buddhist treatises. Famous Chinese traveller Fa-hien also was one of his disciples. It was Kumarajiva who advised him (Fa-hien) to write his *Account of the Buddhist Kingdoms.* While Kumarajiva was earning a fame in China, his teacher Vimalaksa came to China from Kucha. Kumarajiva received his teacher cordially and gave him great respect.

Kumarajiva died in 413 A.D. and on his death bed he advised his followers to believe his works and not his life : 'The lotus grows in the mud', Kumarajiva advised, 'Love the lotus but not the mud'. He is regarded as the first teacher of Madhyamika doctrine and an expounder of the Satyasiddhi school and also of the Nirvana school in China.

Vasubandhu : Great Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu is a highly reputed personality in the history of Buddhism. Although he was a native of Gandhara, he spent a good part of his life in Kashmir. Owing to his colossal and voluminous contribution to Buddhism, Vasubandhu is known to us from more than one source. An important and reliable biography of his was written by a noted Buddhist scholar Paramartha in his monumental work 'Life of Vasubandhu'[130]. Some facts about his life have also been given by Yuan Chwang in his travel accounts[131] and by Taranatha in his *History of Buddhism in India*[132] . On the basis of these sources a brief account of his life may be given as under :

Acarya Vasubandhu was a contemporary of Vikramaditya (455-480 A.D.) and his son Baladitya (c.484). J.Takakusu however, gives his date as 420-500 A.D. He was born in a Kausika brahmana family of Purusapura (Peshavar) in Gandhara. His father was Kausika and his mother Virinchi or Bilindi. Vasubandhu was second of the three brothers. All the three were called Vasubandhu, who were originally adherents of the *Vaibhasikas* of the Sarvastivada school. It was afterwards that the eldest brother came to be known as the great Acarya Asanga who propounded the Yogacara school of Buddhist thought. The youngest brother was known as Virincivatsa or Bilindibhava after his mother's name. The middle one simply remained Vasubandhu but became one of the most prominent figures in the history of Buddhism.

According to Yuan Chwang, he was studying in the monastery of Gandhara where he studied under the teacher named Manoratha. According to Paramartha, in his young age Vasubandhu went to Ayodhya where he received ordination in Hinayana Buddhism from Sthavira Buddhamitra. It was in Ayodhya where Vasubandhu composed many Hinayana and Mahayana works. He travelled to different centres of study and pilgrimage and contacted distinguished scholars.

Taranatha, while giving a detailed discription of Vasubandhu, states that he received ordination in Nalanda where he studied thoroughly the three *Pitakas* of the Sarvastivadins. From here he went to Kashmir to acquire thorough understanding in the *Abhidharma*. According to Taranatha, in Kashmir he mainly studied under Acarya Sanghbhadra. He studied *Vibhasas, Sutras, Vinayas* and the six systems of philosophy. He studied all the *sastras* belonging to the eighteen schools of Buddhism and learned the art of dialectics and thus became a great scholar. Taranatha adds that in Kashmir Vasubandhu explained the *Pitakas* for a number of years distinguishing between what was right and wrong in them.

Vasubandhu again went to Ayodhya and composed there *Abhidharmakosa-sastra* consisting of 600 aphorisms of verses *(Karikas)*. It is a commentary on Katyayaniputra's *Jnana-prasthanasastra.* Vasubandhu sent his work to Kashmir the mean time *Vaibhasikas* who, at first, were greatly pleased to have it. However, they could not understand its aphorisms, being very terse. They requested Vasubandhu to explain to them the object of his work. In the meantime Vasubandhu had become attached to Sautrantika school. Thus, while explaining the aphorisms in a prose treatise called *Abhidharmakosabhasya,* he criticised some doctrines of the Kashmir *Vaibhasikas* in the light of the philosophy of *Sautrantikas.* Kashmir *Vaibhasikas* regarded it as an insult to them and Sanghabhadra wrote a treatise refuting Vasubandhu's work. However, in spite of criticism of Kashmir *Vaibhasikas, Abhidharmakosa* received great reputation and became popular among the adherents of both vehicles—the Hinayana and the Mahayana. In the words of Winternitz—"Though the Abhidharmakosa is written from the standpoint of the Sarvastivada school of the Hinayana.it is nevertheless an authority for all schools of Buddhism. We can learn far more from the *kosa,* with its commentary, about the dogmatics of the ancient Buddhist schools, than from any other work, and it affords us a sidelight upon the doubts between *Vaibhasikas* and the *Santrantikas".*

Another important work which he composed in Ayodhya was *Paramartha-saptati-* ('Seventy verses on the Highest Truth'), It was composed in order to refute the *Sankhya-saptati* of the heretic Vindhyavasa.

Reaching the second stage of his philosophical attainment Vasubandhu was converted to Mahayanism by Acarya Asanga - his elder brother. The story of his conversion to Mahayanism runs thus : Once Vasubandhu read the *Yoga carabhumi*—a Mahayana treatise. Failing to understand it he said something sarcastic about his brother Asanga—the author of the treatise. Asanga thought it the proper time to convert him. He made two monks to memorise one *Sutra* each—the *Aksayamati-nirdesasutra* and the *Dasabhumi-sutra* before him. When Vasubandhu heard these *sutras* he found Mahayana sound both theoretically as well as practically. He regretted on having committed a big sin by disrespecting the Mahayana. He was so much affected that he was ready even to cut off his tongue. But Asanga stopped him, suggesting to expound Mahayana with an equal skill as he had attacked it. Following his brother's advise, Vasubandhu wrote a number of commentaries on Mahayana sutras some of which include :

1. *Saddharmapundarika,*
2. The *Maha-parinirvana-sutra,* and
3. *Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita,* etc.

Defending the doctrine of the reality of pure consciouness Vasubandhu composed two philosophical treatises on subjective idealism - the *vimsatika* comprising of twenty verses and the *trmsika* comprising of thirty verses. This system is known as Vijnanavada.

Vasubandhu towards the end of his life, became a devotee of Amitabha and composed *Apartimitayus-sutropadesa.* It gives the expression to his longing for *Sukhavati.*

Vasubandhu died at the age of eighty years in Ayodha. According to Taranatha, he died in Nepal.

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SECTION - II

Yasyonmeshanimeshabhyam
Jagatah pralayodayav
Tam shakti-chakravibhava-
prabhavam Shankaram stumah

I bow to Shankara, who manifests Himself through His own Energy and whose opening and closing of eyes causes creation and destruction of the Universe.

CHAPTER 2

ABHINAVAGUPTA—THE PHILOSOPHER

—PROF. K.N. DHAR

Abhinavagupta has been extolled as ‘Mahamahesvara” by the subsequent Kashmiri authors, his disciples and admirers, which precisely means the “great devotee of Siva”, or the “Supreme Self” in Shaivistic parlance. Kashmiri tradition also is unequivocal in testifying to his versatility. He wrote on philosophy (Saiva-Darshan, commentary on Bhagvad Gita), commented upon Anandavardhan’s “Dhvanayloka”, Bharata’s ‘’Natya Shastra”, thus epitomized in himself the diverse talents of a philosopher, rhetorician, and a critic on dramaturgy. Moreover on Ksemendra’s testimony, we know that he himself studied literature (Sahitya) with such a learned Guru[1]. His command over rhetorics was so enthralling that Mammatta—the reputed author of ‘Kavya Prakash’ out of veneration for his erudition in the subject refers to him as “Abhinavagupta Pada”.[2] Pada is added to the names to show great respect[3]. Vamana the propounder of Riti school in Indian Rhetorics and commentator of ‘Kavya Prakasha’ known as “Bala Bodhini” has alluded to Abhinavagupta as -“an intellectual giant and like a serpent (terror) to his young school - fellows.” This all goes to prove that Abhinavagupta deserves these compliments fully as given to him by the Kashmiri tradition and literary authors as will be shown later. However, in Indian literary tradition two such names have come down to us. The first Abhinavagupta belongs to Kamarupa (Assam) and is a Sakhta-a worshipper of Shakti or Devi. The solitary reference made to him is by one Madhva in his “Shankra Digvijaya,”[4] who also wrote a

Shanker Bashya, presumably on Badrayan's Vedanta Sutras. He was a contemporary of Sankaracharya who lived according to accepted opinion from 788 to 820 A. D. Abhinavagupta of Assam was in the first instance antagonistic to the monistic theory as preached by Sankara, but having been defeated in the Shastrartha (interpretation of the sacred lore) became his disciple. The Indologist of Dr. Aufrecht's calibre should not have made such a glaring mistake as to include. "Shaktabhashya" among the works of Abhinavagupta of Kashmir. Perhaps the prefixes "Shakhta" and "Maheshwara" make all the difference between the two and this distinction has been made clear between the two even in very early times[5].

Abhinavagupta being a conscious artist was not averse to biography. He has given in the colophons of his various works his genealogy and also some dates. It definitely goes to his credit and does not leave us guessing. In his "Paratrimshika Vivarna" be explicitly pens down the name of his earliest ancestor as Atrigupta who was born in Antarvedi—the Doab between the Ganges and the Jamuna[6]. Again in 'Tantraloka' he refers to his sterling qualities of head and heart and being captivated by these was brought to Kashmir- "The crest of Himalayas" —by King Lalitaditya[7]. The date of the reign of Lalitaditya is circa 725-761. He was also known as Mukhtapida and was eager for conquests[8]. He defeated the king of Kanauj Yasosvarman[9] and along with the booty brought Atrigupta also to Kashmir. Abhinavagupta goes on to record "In that beautiful' city (Srinagar) like that of Kubera's (Alka) in front of the temple of "Sheetanshumauli" (Siva having the moon as his crest) on the Vitasta, the king got built for him a spacious house and also granted a Jagir of land to him[10]. There is a veritable gap of a century and a half between Atrigupta and Abhinavagupta's grand father Varahagupta. In between the two, the author has left the family tree blank for reasons best known to him. Coming direct to the Tantraloka commentary Abhinavagupta explicitly says that his father was Narasinhagupta, popularly known as Chukhulaka and his mother's name was Vimalakala.[11]

Herein we have to refer to the observation made by late Madhusudan Kaul of the Kashmir Research Department who in his introduction to "Ishvara Pratyabhijna" has erroneously taken Laksmana Gupta as his father." Swami Laksmana Ji also corroborates the other view that Narsimha Gupta was his father.[13] More so, the direct confession of Abhinavagupta as regards his parents and their names leaves nothing to argue about[14] Laksmana Gupta was definitely one of the preceptors of Abhinavagupta who initiated him into the Pratyabhijna Shastra as acknowledged by him m his introduction to Ishvara Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini in the words-:

श्री मल्लक्ष्मणगुप्तदर्शितपथः श्रीप्रत्यभिज्ञाविधौ ।

(Sri Laksamna Gupta showed me the path to Pratyabhijna theory (recognition).

The silence of Kalhana about Abbinavagupta as such is intriguing—he mentions three "Abhinavas" in his Raja-Tarangini and the suffix "Gupta" he has not appended with any of these. The first 'Abhinava' is a "Divira" or a scribe,' the second foster-brother of Kayyamantaka in the reign of Samgramaraja[16] and the third a Damara[17] a landed - aristocrat. No where the name of Abhinavagupta appears as a scholar of repute or a Saiva; whereas he has at times referred to such names as Muktakana, Shivasvamin, Anandavardhana and Ratnakara etc.[18] It may be argued that our author was more after learning than after the favour of kings, hence was not attached to any court. Consequently Kalhana, whose forte being the description of kings, skips over him. However, the fame which Abhinavagupta acquired during his life time and even after, could not have eluded the chronicler Kalhana. He could not ignore the powerful Kashmiri tradition. While mentioning Ananda Vardhana the name of Abhinavagupta would have been a natural corollary being his commentator. Subsequent research in this behalf might throw some light on this omission. About his date or probable years in which he lived, he has bequeathed to us some keys which if properly used, can unlock this bane of Indian date - keeping most easily. In the last verse of "Brhati Vimarsini" he states that he finished this assignment in the 90th year when 4115 years of Kaliyuga had elapsed; by deducting 25 years from the Kali era, the local or Saptarsi era can be found. It works at 4090th year of the Saptarsi Calendar, and the word "Navatitame" used by him in that verse corresponds to 90th year of 4000 Kali era. Even, we at present write down only 74 when actually it is 1974— seventy fourth year of 1900 Christian era.

Again in one of his Stotras which is called "Bairavastava" in the last verse he gives the date and his name also:—-

वसुरसपौषेकृष्णदशम्यामभिनवगुप्तः स्तवमिदमकरोत् ।

"Abhinavagupta composed this Stava (eulogy) on the 10th of dark fortnight in the month of Pausha in the year Vasu (8) Rasa (6)."

(In Sanskrit the digits are read from the left), hence it comes to 68. It is definitely the 68th year of the Saptarsi Samvat 4000 as shown above. Moreover, in his Kramastotra he again refers to date as :—

षट्षष्ठिनामके वर्षे नवम्यामसितेऽहनि ।
मयाऽभिनवगुप्तेन मार्गशीर्षे स्तुतः शिवः ।।

"In the 66th year, on the ninth day of dark fortnight, I, Abhinavagupta, in the month of Maghar praised Lord Siva". So it can safely be inferred that Abhinavagupta's literary period extended from 4066 to 4090 laukika or Saptarsi era corresponding to 990-1015 A.D. Even though we have tried to locate the period, but at the same time we are not sure that Kramastotra is his first work. It is to be remembered in this context that Abhinavagupta having written a host of books, the chronological order of his works cannot be fixed easily. Those works which bear the dates can be arranged without any effort, but those which have no date or have not been referred to by the subsequent authors will defeat any such solution. In this way we can safely say that "Kramastotra" might not be his first composition, it might be pushed back to two decades at least, as in the chronological order fixed by Dr. K. C. Pandey this Stotra stands at No.13[19]. Hence we might safely assume that his literary career commenced from 970 A. D. According to his own testimony he adopted many Gurus for pursuing knowledge in different fields and even went outside Kashmir, presumably to Jalandhar to find a Guru "Shamboo Math" there[20]. The years of initiation after which maturity dawned on him might be taken not less than 30 years, after which, confidence was gained by him to write independently. Hence we might place his birth nearabout 940- A. D. He might have lived even beyond 1015 A. D. and the veracity of the tradition prevalent in Kashmir to this day, that he entered a cave while reciting the Bhairavastava alongwith 1200 disciples, and was never seen again cannot be doubted. This cave, alleged to have received the mortal frame of Abhinavagupta, is situated at "Birwa" village some five miles from Magam on the Gulmarg range.

The thirst for knowledge in our author was insatiable. A bevy of Gurus was adopted by him for this purpose. According to his own statement he read at the feet of:—

	Subject
1. Narasimha Gupta (His father).	Grammar
2. Vainanatha.[1]	Dvaitadvaita Tantras.
3. Bhuti Rajatanaya	Dualistic Saivism.
4. Bhuti Raja.	Brahma - Vidya.
5. Laksmanagupta.	Pratyabhijna.
6. Indu Raja.	Dhvani.
7. Bhatta Tota.	Dramaturgy.

He had other Gurus also but the subjects have not been specified in their cases. From all his compositions at least 19 such preceptors can be gleaned.

As will be said later,[22] the 10th and 11th centuries in Kashmiri literary lore have been a landmark. The influence of religion has been pronounced. A climate of religious renaissance was ushered in and many stalwarts like Anandavardhana, Vamana, Ksemendra, Bilhana, Kalhana and last but not the least Abhinavagupta contributed himself in making the Sanskrit literary tradition richer and all the more diverse, in as much as, the subjects like rhetorics, dramaturgy, poetry, history and philosophy, were treated in an admirable way. So, it can be of value to learn that the whole family of Abhinavagupta was renowned for its unique literary bent of mind. His uncle Vamana Gupta was an expert in poetics and be initiated our author into this field. In the Abhinava Bharati Abhinavagupta quotes him and is also included in the list of his teachers.[23] His younger brother Manoratha was admitted to the disciple-hood of his brother-Abhinavagupta-perhaps he was first in that order[24]. His five cousins Ksema, Utpala, Abhinava, Chakraka and Padamgupta were also very well read. If Ksema be identified with Ksema Raja the Author of Spanda-Nirnaya and other treatises on Shaivism, then the scholarship of his cousin is beyond doubt. It need not be reitered that his father Narasimhagupta possessed intellectual calibre of highest order and was proficient in all the Shastras and a great devotee of Shiva.[25] In this atmosphere of devotion and learning par excellence, Abhinava Gupta was mentally groomed to undertake the stupendous task awaiting him.

So, it is not surprising to find that "Jayaratha"[26] alludes to his being 'Yoginibhu',[27] that his parents while uniting for his birth rose above all worldly desires and identified themselves with Shiva and

Shakti. The offspring thus born called Yoginibhu, is looked upon as a fit vehicle for propounding and propagating Shaivistic Monism.

Not only this, Abhinavagupta has been called a Bhairava incarnate by the commentator of Parmartha-Sara; "Yoga - Raja," while commenting on the last line of this treatise:

अभिनवगुप्तेन मया शिवचरणस्मरणदीपिते।

has explained this epithet at length. So the traditional belief amongst the Kashmiri Pandits that Abhinavagupta was a living Bhairava in human form is not without basis.

Now we come to the place of his mental activity. From his own authority we learn that Lal taditya had got built a palatial house for Atrigupta when he carried him along from Antarvedi to Kashmir (quoted earlier). The house was built on the banks of Vitasta वितस्तारोधसि. However, in one of the Mss of Tantraloka belonging to Late Pt. Maheshwar Razdan there is a different reading as वैतस्त मूर्ध्नि meaning "at the head of Vitasta" i.e. the source. However, in the quotation is used the pronoun तस्मिन् (in) agreeing with प्रवरपुरे (Srinagar) hence this वतस्तमूर्ध्नि seems to be an interpolation.

In the first verse on the Vartika on "Malini Vjjaya" it has been specifically laid down:

प्रवरपुरनामधेये पुरे पूर्वे काशमीरिकोऽभिनवगुप्तः।
मालिन्यामादिमेवाक्ये वार्तिकमेतद्रचयतिस्म।।

"The Kashmirian Abhinavagupta in the East of the city known as Pravarapura (Srinagar) composed the Vartika on the very first verse of "Malinivijya".

From this it is clear that Srinagar was divided into several zones then—East, West etc. and in the East Zone our author lived; but nothing can be said whether this was his ancestral home or an acquired house. However, there is a reference in the Tantraloka of his having shifted to another city at the request of one of his disciples Mandra :

विक्षिप्तभावपरिहारमसौ चिकीर्षन् मन्द्रः स्वके पुरवरे स्थितिमस्य वव्रे।

"Mandra in order to save him (Abhinavagupta) from distraction requested him to shift to his beautiful city."[28]

It is also clear from this, that this earlier house must have been located in a very busy centre of the city, so was not suitable for his calm composure and undivided, attention, so necessary for the delineation of such a terse and delicate subject as philosophy.

On the authority of Kalhana we know that Lalitaditya had built three more cities in the outskirts of Pravarapura— Srinagar. The one Parihasapura and the other Lalit pura and the third Lokapunya. However, the former was meant as a respite for the war-worn king[29] and all the amenities of Parihasa (enjoyment) were provided there.' Hence it could not be a quiet city. The latter was not taken kindly to by the king as it was built by his architect in his absence,[30] hence it must have been comparatively deserted and all the same calmer. It might be surmised that Mandra lived there and invited his Guru to that very city for being quieter and far from the madding crowds, so that his "distraction could be averted". The third city along with a cluster of villages was given in offering to Vishnu.[31]

Even though Abbinavagupta lived during the span of 940-1015 A. D. but no city worth the name was founded by the kings during this period. Although he saw the reigns of Yashaskara, Samgrama Deva, Ksema Gupta, Didda and Samgrama Raja, yet the cities founded by Lalitaditya still found favour with the people. Even though one century and a half had elapsed, the twin cities of Parihaspura and Lalitpura had not fallen into oblivion. In the reign of Samgrama Raja (1003-1028 A. D.) the Brahmins of Parihasapura started a fast to bring down the fall of Tunga[32] his Prime Minister. This allusion to the city nearly two hundred years after it was founded, testifies to its being very important at that time and might have been the royal capital even.

Before an attempt is made to pen down the contribution of Abhinavagupta to Shaivism, it will be more appropriate to trace the origin of Siva worship in Kashmir. Perhaps as a corollary to this, we shall have to furnish at least the rough contours on which the earliest religion of Kashmiris was based.

The most ancient book on Kashmir History 'Nilamata Purana' specifically lays down that Shiva and His Shakti were propitiated at that time, but other deities such as Ganesha, Puranic gods, Vedic pantheon and even Buddha (as an Avatara) were not ignored.[33] This fact without any doubt proves that earliest Kashmiri religion was polytheistic in content and character, but the worship of Shiva and His consort Parvati had an edge over all other gods. Not only this, the aboriginal deities like Nikumbha etc. were also owned. On the same subject S. C. Ray observes, "that the earliest inhabitants of Kashmir probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs...... In the third century B. C. Buddhism seems to have made some headway in

Kashmir. Among Hindu gods Shiva either originated or entered the valley some time before the faith of the Shakya prine.[34]

In this connection the word "Naga used to describe the people of Kashmir, did diopah in as to its being related to Snake - worship. But word "Naga" in Sanskrit does not mean snake, only, it is synonymous with a semi-divine being, a cruel person, an elephant or a cloud also. However, Shiva's associatic with the religion of Kashmir did provide a center for translating "Naga" as a serpent, as it is worn the Lord around His neck. In this connection H. H. Wilson remarks, "originally, no doubt, it (the religit of Kashmir) was opiate or snake - worship, but this a part of the Hindu ritual and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon[36]" So it is abundant clear that the ancient religion of Kashmir was an amalgam of the ''new" as preached by Kashyapa and the old — that of the aboriginals whose king was Nikumbha. Even though other gods were also worshipped the emphasis on Shiva and His Shakti was pronouced. The influence of Buddhism as such in those times was not worth mentioning, since it was only being adopted by the land then, and after some time did give a fillip to the philosophical rambling which reigned supreme for nearabout two centuries in Kashmir.[35]

Kalhana has copiously furnished us the proof that Buddhism and orthodox creeds of Shiva and Visnu co-existed in a most tolerant manner here. Whenever any endowment is made for religious purposes, or a Stupa or a Vihara is constructed, individual or he king, or his members of the family or his Minister with equal zeal and faith construct shrines of Shiva and Vishnu.[36] also.

However, this climate of accommodation between the two faiths - Hinduism and Buddhism was disturbed by the advent of Nagarjuna on the Kashmir scene. He lived at Shadarhatvana (modern Harwan) and took preaching of Buddhism in right earnest. This provoked the "orthodoxy". Insult was added to the injury by King Kanishka (125—60 A.D) who encouraged the propagation of the Buddhistic teachings and gave it royal patronage.[37] Kalhana while recording all this has to say: "After defeating in disputations all learned opponents (Nagarjuna), these enemies of tradition brought to an end etc. the observance of the rites prescribed in the Nilamata."[38] This was a veritable revolt against the established faith of the land and the astute Brahmin lost no opportunity in providing a more palatable alternative to Buddhistic tenets which may well be called the seeds of Shaivism which sprouted forth in full bloom later.

Perhaps this pre-supposes the give and take which must have preceded before Buddhism went into oblivion in Kashmir. The most potent cause for its decline was that the Shaivism fought on its own ground and assimilated such tenets which were finding favour with the people. Thus the Shaivas on account of their exceptional erudition did provide such a faith to people which though new, was not at all alien. It respected orthodoxy but at the same time did not abhor the "new". A compromise between the two did the trick and Buddhism had to eat the humble pie.

Moreover, the versatile Brahmin of Kashmir, did not stop to lick his wounds inflicted by Buddhist propagation, but like a seasoned general attacked its weakest point i.e. the silence about God. Indians at large and a Kashmiri especially, are a God-fearing nation, hence the Shaivite knowing full well this credulity of a Kashmiri, transplanted God again in their faith by naming it Paramshiva or Sadashiva with its antecedent the Para Shakti. In all the treatises on Shaivism hair-splitting arguments are laid down in proving the existence of the "Supreme Soul". Hence the Buddhists had to take up to their heels in the absence of any powerful counter-argument on this subject. Perhaps the people in general, also became sceptic about their faith, because their belief in God is skin - deep. This has actually permeated their marrow even, they could consequently not reconcile themselves with more are less "Godless" faith. The adage "Had there been no God, Man would have invented one" was proved to the hilt in Kashmir. Herein it will be of interest to mention that Shankaracharaya's visit to Kashmir acted as the last nail in the Buddhist coffin.

Shankara after his unparalleled victory over the Buddhists in plains came to Kashmir sometime about the second decade of the 9th century.[39] Even though no other reference regarding his visit to Kashmir has been traced as yet, the popular tradition corroborates its authenticity. This cannot be dismissed cheaply, in as much as, that on the perusal of Shankra's treatises it becomes patently clear that his compositions did influence the Kashmiri Saiva literature; more so his imprint on Pratyabbijna (theory of recognition) is obviously discerned. In his "Dakhshina Murti Stotra" commented upon by his pupil Sureshvaracharya the conception of ultimate reality as preached by him and known as Tantric philosophy and that expounded in Pratyabhijna seems to be the same. Not only this, even some technical terms as used in Pratyabbijna have been earlier used by him in the same sense:-

(१) ज्ञानक्रिये जगत्कल्पितौ द्वश्यते चेतनाश्रये।

Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13,

(२) ज्ञान क्रिया च भूतानां जीवताम् जीवनं मतम्।

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshim- 1, 39)

Translation: (i)

" The universe has been created out of knowledge and action and seems also possessed of consciousness."

Translation (ii)

" Knowledge and action are considered the source of all living beings."

(१) तस्भात सत्ता स्फुरत्ता च सर्वत्रापयानुवतर्ते।

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13)

(२) सा स्फुरत्ता महा सत्ता देशकालाविशेषिणी।

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini 1, 207)

Translation (i)

" Therefore, that shining spirit follows everywhere the opposite direction (beyond time and space)."

Translation (ii)

" The shining supreme spirit is not bound by space and time."

Such examples can be multiplied and so the internal evidence culled from the compositions of Shankara regarding his coming to Kashmir and subsequently not only the thought but even the expressions being found common in both (as above), it may be safely inferred that he did come to Kashmir and had presumably discussions with the propounders of Shaiva faith here. On a profcund perusal of his "Saundarya Lahari" it becomes lucid that he got influenced also by Kashmirian Shaiva Acharyas and did concede the existence of monistic Tantras and also their number:-

चतुः षष्टया तन्त्रैः सकलं अभिसंधाय भुवनम्।

(Saundaraya Lahari)

Translation;

(O Devi), You having built the whole universe with sixty four Tantras...........

Hence we come to the stage when Buddhism being banished, the vacuum thus erected began to be filled by the Acharayas of Saivism who had the blessings of Shankaracharya also.

However, the Buddhists definitely earn credit for initiating the modus operandi of discussions, symposia and religious congregations for propagating their philosophy and projecting this to the masses. We have references of Buddhist councils being held here in Ashoka's and Kanishka's time.[40] In this connection Dr. R. K. Kaw has to say "It will be observed that Buddhists initiated a critical view in matters which were so far believed only as gospel truths."[41] Shiva and Shakti also inducted into their cult the method of philosophical reasoning and persuasive argumentation. "Shaiva Literature" is fully replete with these two ingredients.

The whole of Shaiva literature comes under the name of Trika, Trikashastra or Trikashasana. The derivation of the epithet "Trika" among other things can be ascribed to triple principle with which this system deals e.g. Shiva, Shakti, Ann; Pati, Pasha and Pashu; Nara, Shakti and Shiva; Para and Apara, and Parapara and finally Bheda, Abheda; Bbeda, and Abehda; or it may have been called as such, "'For the reason that its chief authority is the triad consisting of three chief Agamas Siddha, Namaka, and Malini.[42] This literature falls into three-categories:-

i) The Agama - Shastra
ii) The Spanda - Shastra.
iii) Pratyabhijna - Shastra.

"The Agamas are believed to be revelations, having come down through ages."[43] These emphasize the doctrine of Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action) for becoming one with the superself.

The most important composition of this branch are the "Shiva Sutras". Their authorship is attributed to Lord Shiva and were in course of time revealed to Sage Vasugupta. On the authority of Raja Tarangini we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta lived in the reign of Avanti Varman (855-883 A.D.)[44]

Hence it is clear that Vasugupta whose reputation was established as a Shaiva teacher must have preceded him at least by 30 years if not more i.e. 825 A.D. The purpose of writing this thesis (or communicating it as the tradition goes) was to counteract the dualistic teachings in vogue at that time. In Shivasutra Vimarshini by Kshema Raja, it is clearly laid down:—

द्वैतदर्शनाधिवासितप्राये. जीवलोके रहस्यसप्रदायो मा विच्छेदि –
इत्याशयतः।

" The occult school (of Saiva) may not get into oblivion by the preaching of duality amongst the people- with this purpose."

So the Agamas taught the pure non-dualistic Monism.

The Spandashastra actually amplifies the main principles of shaivism in greater detail than the Shiva-Sutras. The main treatise on this Shastra is Spanda Sutras or Karikas which have been commented upon by Kallata, Ramakantha, Utpalavaishnava (Not of Shaiva School) and Kshema Raja. The content of philosophical reasoning is missing in the main treatise, while the commentators have tried to supply it with meaningful success. Kshema Raja in his commentary ascribes to Vasugupta the authorship of this Shastra also. But Utpala (Vaishnava) uses the unambiguous phrase while commenting on the very first Sutra in his Pradipika. He gives it as "Sangraha grant bakrta" meaning "a work which gathers together the meaning of Shiva Sutras."[45] In one of his verses he attributes its authorship to Bhatta Kallata via Vasu Gupta.[46] But this verse is not found in the recensior of Kshema Raja. However, it is to make clear that contents being the same in Shiva-Sutras and Spanda Sutras the authorship could not be different. As the Shiva-Sutras have been revealed to Vasu Gupta, hence Spanda Shastra may also be his acquisition.

The word "Spanda" as prefixed with this branch" of Trika means "a throb", "quivering" or "movement.' The quivering of the mind receives the beautitude of the "Super soul" and hence attains the "Nishkampa Pradipa"— unquivering flame of the lamp as given in Bhagvad Gita[47], or the name to this treatise may be explained as the "throbs of Lord Shiva' clothed in words by later Yogis and Siddhas such as Vasugupta etc.

The third and the most important school of Shaivadarshan is the Pratyabhijna cult with which our author is directly concerned. Somananda is said to be the originator of this branch[3] and has been called as "Tarksya Karta" meaning the founder of reasoning"[48]. He was a pioneer in grafting the element of argument, reasoning, support and refutation on rational lines into this system. The first book of this system is "Shiva Drishti" whose authorship is attributed to Soma Nanda. Unfortunately this masterly treatise is now extant upto four Ahnikas (Chapters) only; atleast it had seven as is clearly quoted by Abhinavagupta in Para - Trimsika. Perhapes this is the main reason as to why his erudite commentator Utpaladeva does not go beyond 74th verse of the IV Ahnika. Subsequently the three chapters were salvaged and the number made seven; but it seems that these form a part of the Vrtti (gloss) compiled by Somananda himself and not the original one. The "Forte" of Somananda's teaching is:

शिवो दाता शिवोभोक्ता शिवः सर्वमिदं जगत्।

"Shiva" the auspicious and Supreme soul, is the giver and he is the enjoyer. This whole universe is (permeated by) Shiva."

His disciple and at times taken to be his son also[50] Utpaladeva commented in a most scholastic manner on the "Shiva Drishti" of Soma Nanda, and for the first time introduced the element of Pratyabhijna in Shaiva literature. He named his treatise, though based on the doctrine taught by Somananda as "Ishwara Prtayabhijna-Karikas" in Sutra form consisting of four Adhikaras (cantos), further subdivided into a number of Ahnikas or sections. He also propounded "Svataotriya" theory of his own, independent of his Guru Somananda. By Svatantriya he means the "self dependent power of the lord". His exposition of the "Recognition Doctrine" has the sanctity and the authority what it should have deserved, and was even equated with Somananda the originator as:—

श्री सोमानन्दनाथस्यविज्ञानप्रतिबिम्बकम्

"Reflection of the wisdom of Somananda"

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini — 2. Introduction)

Perhaps being very much enamoured by the wisdom of Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta composed the shorter[52] and longer versions of his commentary on the Ishwara Pratyabhijna of Utpala; who discarding all the names for this system anointed it with Pratyabhijna - recognition. This name alone has stood the test of time and is perhapes synonymous with Trika as a whole; while in essence this is not the case.

The order of Gurus (Guru Parampara) as given in Shaiva Darshani is as follows:—

श्रीकण्ठ वसुमन्तं (वसुगुप्तं) सोमानन्दं तथोत्पलाचार्यम्।
लक्ष्मणमभिनवगुप्तं वन्दे श्री क्षेमराजं च।।

"I bow to Lord Shiva, Vasugupta, Somananda, and Utpalacharaya, Lakshmana (Gupta), Abhinavagupta and Kshema Raja."

A faint echo of teacher-taught relation can also be heard into it. Vasugupta pupil of Lord Shiva, Somananda pupil of Vasugupta, Utpala pupil of Soma Nanda, Abhinavagupta pupil of Lakshmanagupta and Kshemaraja the pupil of Abhinavagupta. Had both Vasugupta and Somananda been the pupils of Lord, then the insertion of "Cha" would have made it clear.

From this it is clear that Vasugupta and Somananda represent the originators through the good offices of Lord Shiva while Utpala, Lakshmanagupta Abbinavagupta and Kshemaraja constitute the heirs to this system, who in their own way interpreted, supplemented and enriched the word sent to the humanity by Lord Shiva through the first two Gurus.

Out of a host of such interpreters Abhinavagupta is not only the best but also possessed of multifaced genius. Not confining himself to the ramifications of "Saiva Darshan" he also strayed into the domain of Rhetorics by subscribing to Rasa theory in his commentary on Bharata Natya Shastra, and also into poetics when elucidating the "Dhvani" as enunciated by Ananda Vardhana. However, we have to delimit his versatility and shall describe him only as a religious philosopher.

However, before embarking upon this, it will not be out of place to give roughly the main characteristics of this "Darshan" so that in light of these, we might determine the place of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher; as to how he explained these and for sooth, even improved upon these.

The "Saiva Shasana"[53] starts with the assumption that Atman is the real and innermost self in everything. It does not undergo any change and is a vehicle to experience the "Parameshwara" or the Chaitanayam[2] चैतन्यमात्मा. This "Parameshwara" or Param Shiva" is not bound by time, space and form, so is omnipotent and omnipresent. However, He has a dual role— the one which pervades whole of the universe and the other transcendental in which he defeats all mainfestations. His power of pervading the universe is called Shakti, but coming out of His fountain-head is only an aspect of His and not in any way different from Him. Even though these Energies or powers have been called numerous,[55] yet only five are the most notable.[53] The Chita Shakti (the power of resplendence) Ananda Shakti (the power of bliss), Ichha Shakti (the power of desire), Jnana Shakti (the power of knowledge), and the Kriya Shakti (the power of action), with the help of these, the "Paramshiva" manifests itself which in Saiva language is called Udaya, Unmesha, Abhasa or Srishti.

However, to create a universe is the necessity even though. He is world-incarnate. Hence the universe has been thought to be composed of "Shiva Tattva (pure, auspicious element) Shakti Tattva (potential element Sadakhya Tattva (the element of self realisation, or being) Aishwaraya Tattva (element of identification) and last but not the least the Sad-Vidya Tattva (the element of true perception).[3] When in between the self and self-realization, Maya (obduration, delusion) obscures the real form of objects, the Sadha ka (experiencer) has to rise above Kala (time), Niyati (sequence), Raga (attachment) Vidya (limited perception of consciousness) Kala (limited authorship).[4] Such an experiencer who has been doped by Maya and is obsessed with tim: etc. is called "Purusha" Simultaneously with it is also born Prakriti", that latent power in him which goads him on to act or react. To awake from the slumber under the influence of Maya, the Purusha conjointly with Prakriti has to undergo some mental drill and comprehend the implication of Buddhi (conception). Ahanakara (personal I or ego) and Manas (desire)". Taken in reverse order, the desire actuates "I" ness and at the last stage conception of things becomes clear. Hence the Purusha awakeness by rejecting Maya and its five concomitants being with Time (Kala) etc., comes face to face with चित्स्वरूपं resplendence or Shambhavi state and attains the Paramaishwarya or Self-dependence (Supreme bliss).[61] This is the purport of Shaiva Darshan or Shaiva Monism as given in the "Shiva Sutra" and "Shiva Drishiti" on broad lines.

Dr. K. C. Pandey has given a long list of some 41 compositions attributed to Abbinavagupta.[62] Among these some bear dates, some are referred to by subsequent authors and some have been owned by tradition. However, the most famous works of his on "Shaiva darshan", strictly speaking are:—

1. Para - Trimshika Vivarna.
2. Prataybhijna Vimarshini (expurgated)
3. Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini (full)
4. Tantrasara.
5. Yantraloka.
6. Parmarthasara.
7. Commentary on Bhagvadgita Called Gitartha—Sangraha.

Many other compositions of his such as "Shiva Drishtyalocana" a commentary on "Shiva Drishti" as the name clearly signifies, is lost.

Chronologically speaking the "Para Trimshika" seems to be his first work in the "Shaiva Lore". It is in reality composed of the concluding portion of "Rudrayamala Tantra" belonging to Agama school on which Abhinavagupta penned down a commentary calling it Vivarna. However, the title of the book suggests its containing thirty verses only (Trimshika), but it has even more than these. There seems to be some confusion amongst the later commentators regarding its name, while the author himself has tried to justify it like this :-

"Trimshika" is so called because it is the Supreme Lord of three powers desire, knowledge, and action.

त्रींशिका इति तिसृणां शक्तीनां इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाणामीशिका ईश्वरी।।

'Para' in Shaiva terminology is identical with 'Parasamvid'— the highest power of Self-Dependence. Hence 'Para Trimshika' would connote 'thirty verses of Self-Dependence', or the Super Lord of the triple formula of desire knowledge, and action.

Pratyabhijnavimarshini and its larger edition Vivriti balong to the Pratyabhijna (recognition) school of Shaiva Shastra as propounded by Utpala Deva and originated by Somananda.[64]

Tantrasara and Tantraloka deal with the same contents with the difference that the former is a brief summary (Sara) of the latter, a voluminous treatise. The Tantrasara is couched in prose while the Tantraloka is in metrical form. These are definitely based on Malini Vijayatantra belonging to Agama school.

Parmarthsara is a philosophical composition of 105 verses and is supposed to be based on the Karikas of Shesha. In his Gitarthasangraha, Abhinavagupta has emphatically declared that freedom from all miseries can be obtained by seeing Him (Paramshiva) in everything and everywhere. This freedom cannot be achieved by renunciation of the world. The battle between Pandvas and Kurvas is actually the race between Vidya (knowledge, perception) and Avidya (ignorance, blurred perception).[65]

From the above it is clear that Abhinavagupta not only explained Pralyabhijna on which his fame rests, but also other Tantric works belonging to different schools. He did not believe in isolation but in collation which is the keynote of his philosophic bent of mind. Other commentators like Utpala, Kshemaraja etc. confined themselves to a single path but Abhinavagupta not only rode on other paths but also proved the old adage "All roads lead to Rome." He made a compromise between different views and presented such a philosophy of life which never grew stale. His synthesis - oriented approach to life gave a meaningful and healthy direction to his ideas.

Philosophy, strictly speaking, is the science of knowledge or the Tattva Vidya, the lore of the real nature of human soul or material world as being identified with the supreme spirit. Since knowledge emanates from Him, hence it can be usefully used as a medium to interpret Him. If there be no originality and no Shaivacharya has claimed it, since "Shiva-sutras" are the word of God, the originality definitely lies in interpreting these and untravelling the esoteric content in a most intelligible and homely idiom. In this field also Abhinavagupta has no parallel.

It is also to be remembered that our author does not rest his oars on the philosophic polemics, but also connects these with the ritual. Herein also he shows a master - mind in fitting ritual with philosophy, the mundane with the spirit, the real with the ideal and to crown all practice with the precept. On account of his versatile genius he is at home in explaining the abstract in the context of the concrete. While revelling in the super world he does not forget the world as such. He is not a dreamer but an awake artist feeling rightly the pulse of supersensuousness but at the same time not forgetting the converse form of it. He tries to explore the obverse and the converse at the same time. Hence his treatment of the subject is more realistic. Perhaps that is the main reason as to why pratyabhijna school though bequeathed to him by earlier Acharyas was actually made popular by him. He not only translated the terse philosophy in the tongue of the people but also gave it the most natural direction. Abhinavagupta does not claim any originality for introducing this "Shaiva Darshan", but most candidly records:—

श्रीसोमानन्दमतं विमृश्य मया निबद्धमिदम् ।।

"Having thought over the views of Shri Soma-nanda, I systematized these."

Moreover, in the realm of philosophy, originality is a misnomer; because the philosophy as such is the cumulative thinking processed through ages and then finding expression through the pen or mouth of an erudite scholar. Even Shankara without mincing words, categorically states that the authenticity of a system is to be tested on the touchstone of Vedas.[66] Somananda, the originator of Pratyabhijna school admits that his "Shaivadrishti" is based on Shastras, though his pupil Utpalacharya testifies to its showing new path for final emanicipation[67]. In all humility (because true knowledge bestows humility) Abhinavagupta follows the same tradition of thinking.

It may be contended that he did not compose any treatise independently, but only commented upon the works of his predecessors.[68] Therefore he can be a commentator at best, but not an original thinker. Commentary from Abhinavagapta's view point is not merely a jugglery of words but actually the personal experience gained through spiritual experiments. He lived the maxims on which he commented. So in the exposition of such matters he sets for himself three norms - first being the personal experience, reason the second, and ancient authority the third.[69] So the contribution of Abhinavagupta to this system of philosophy is not simply of academic interest but is replete with other dimensions of thinking which even the originators failed to comprehend. The commentators preceding him gave mere dogmatic statements of the basic tenets of the Spanda school. They dared not subtract or add to these by way of argument, reasoning and judicious explanation for or against the fundamental principles. Even though some commentators notably Utpalacharya did introduce the element of argument into it, but his domain was only one-sided related to Pratyabhijna only and not the "Trika" as a whole. Abhinavagupta on the contrary did improve on him, though being his disciple, making it broad-based and embracing the whole gamut of Shaiva Shastra.[70] He provided rational base to it and also dwelt on the ritualistic aspect of this system. He has exhaustively explained the Monistic Shaiva rituals also. He made a happy blend of philosophy and psychology, quoted extensively from the Agamas and other established authorities; perhaps he has every right to assert":-

"अद्रष्टं प्रकटीकुर्मःगुरुनाथाज्ञया वयम्" ।[७१]

"I (we) will unravel the "unseen" at the bidding of my Guru and Lord."

This verse does allude to the shortcomings of the earlier commentators who could not convert अद्रष्टं (unseen) into द्रष्टं (seen), and so it was left to Abhinavagupta to perceive it in right perspective and accordingly transmit it to others through his writings—commentaries. His scathing criticism of Buddhists and schools of philosophy other than Shaiva with biting wit and pungent sarcasm is perhaps the most original content of what he has written.

His brief yet most pregnant definition of "Trika" definitely portrays his mastery over this system:—

शिवशक्तिसंघट्टात्मकं परत्रिकशब्दवाच्यम् ।

"The unison of Shiva (Paramashiva) and "Shakti" (Para Shakti) is termed as supertrika".

Very succinctly he also lays down the aim of this Shastra—"The removal of veil of ignorance."[73] However, the fundamental difference between the Vedanta and Shaivism though professing the same aim, is real rather than apparent. In Vedanta the negation of the facts of experience are a must presupposition for realization of the self; The illusion regarding the snake and rope is quite known. But in Trika there is no negative approach towards the universe but in fact an affirmation of the facts of experience with new inter-pretation. With this positive understanding of the environs, the realizer is simply face to face with self-recognition which in Shaiva-terminology is called self-realization.

While dealing with Pratyabhijna (self-recognition) Guru Somananda defines it as the two fold function of perception and remembrance in its totality at the same time.[74] Utpala Deva thinks that the term Pratyabhijna connotes, the power of self, the power of cognition and power of action— a triple amalgam:

द्रक्क्रियात्मिकाशक्ति ।[75]

In this realm also Abhinavagupta shows his originality in defining the term "Pratyabhijna" as:—

तस्य महेश्वरस्य प्रत्यभिज्ञा प्रतीपं आत्माभिमुखेन ज्ञानं प्रकाशः
प्रत्यभिज्ञा ।[76]

"Recognition of that supreme self is to be face to face with what was forgotten through effulgence (of consciousness).

While explaining the word Pratipam (प्रतीपं) he very lucidly says that " (it) means that which was forgotten, or concealed but now coming into view not through remembrance but by clear cognition."

Furthermore to make it more lucid, Abhinavagupta explains that cognition is composed of :—

भातभासमानरूपानुसंधानात्मिका ।[९]

"When the past perception and the present perception are revived (by the object coming in full view)".

Giving an example of past perception and present perception and their getting revived he says:—

स एवायं चैत्र इति।

"He is that very Chaitra" (name of a person, - who was already seen before). His coming face to face now is called present perception and his cognition (that he is really the same person) was done by the previous or past perception, the bridge between the perceptions being remembrance born of mental impression (संस्कार). Our author's independent thinking can very easily be inferred from an ingenious definition of Pratyabhijna.[78]

Herein he does not follow his preceptor but provides a very homely definition, when he says that the Lord is possessed of Infinite Powers (पूर्णशक्ति स्वभावः). This characteristic of Him is corroborated extensively by Puranas, Siddhantas and Agamas as also by reasoning and inference etc. When by direct experience we ascertain His Nature in our own self, this may be termed as having recognized Him, or in other words, the cognition takes place.

Abhinavagupta does not consider remembrance the only vehicle of identifying the present perception with the past one, Even though Somananda explicitly lays down the role of remembrance in connecting the present and past, perception and Utpala also endorses it; Abhinavagupta comments :

पुनः अभिमुख्येन, न तु स्मर्यमानतया अपितु स्फुटत्वेन ज्ञानं
प्रत्यभिज्ञाम् ।[79]

"But being face to face and not by remembering alone, the knowledge (perception) because of being made clear. Recognition takes place."

He very cogently argues that remembrance is related to sight; first having seen a certain object we are reminded of it when some such form crosses our eyes. But there are cases of falling in love without seeing each others[80], wherein the medium of arousing love and accepting the lover from the depths of heart is confined to "either the words of female messenger or confidante or the perception of such traits in him (as being her ideal) or by any other deeds which made him renowned, she is persuaded to accept him".[81] Here in this cases' दृष्टि (sight) has played no part, hence the image which first sight would have caught cannot be repeated at the subsequent sights. The remembrance is altogether absent in it. The master-philosopher goes on to argue that in this case the love-lorn lady naturally weaves the pictures of his beauty, gallantry or any other exceptional distinction on the authority of three sources mentioned above. This picture will definitely be at variance with the one if the lover meets her incognito. There is no repetition of image as in the case of "Chaitra" (given earlier), how will the recognition take place? Abhinavagupta raising the controversy himself provides a most plausible answer to this predicament. When incognito hero is introduced as lover whom she has been loving for his qualities all along, the heroine receives a shock instead of joy. As long as the qualities of the hero are not revealed to her and she certifies these by her own experience and also on the authenticity of others "He is that very person" the recognition is not so simple and easy. Hence the obstruction between what has been heard and what is actually seen is to be removed, so that the identification between the "imaginary" and the "real" is possible. Thus at this juncture the recognition is possible only by the removal of the veil as also the reconciliation between both the mental images one imaginary or unseen and the other seen or face to face.[82] Accordingly Abhinavagupta supplements the remembrance (स्मरण) with (अनुभव) cognition derived from personal observation or experience. On the seeming contradiction between unity and plurality, Utpaladeva contends that:—

तत्र अन्तरं तत्त्वमेकम् ।[83]

"The internal reality of things of diverse nature is unity",

तदेवन्द्रियवेद्यतां संप्राप्य ।

"That very unity attaining the knowledge or perception of senses."

अनेकर्ता याति देशकालस्वभावतः ।

"gets multiplied under the influence of time, space and real nature of objects." Like an original thinker Abhinavagupta makes it more clear and simple by saying:

अथ व्यपदेशमात्रं एतत् कारणं अकारणं च ।

"The cause or no cause are one and same, so unity and plurality can be the attributes of one and same object."

नीलं पीतं अविकल्पकसविकल्पमित्यपि
सर्वं मायापदे व्यवहारमात्रम् ।

(So, in essence the objects internally are one consciousness, but practically speaking as being differentiated by the blue and yellow (colours) unchangeable indeterminate or determinate imply multiplicity externally at the illusory level."

It will be pertinent here to allude to the aim of the system of philosophy as preached by Abhinavagupta. The unavoidable preamble to every philosophic thought is to describe the why and what of that what teacher or preacher wishes us to know. In the treatment of this subject Abhinavagupta sets norms of (स्वसंवित्) personal experience तर्क (reasoning) and thirdly the पतिशास्त्र (scripture) and in the context of these he tries to explain the domain of his experience. Herein he exhibits a marvellous sense of independent judgment. He does not accept the theories of Logicians as given in Nyaya Shastra, or as expounded in Vaishesika in details or fundaments. From the dualism of Sankhya, idealism of Baudhas and monism of Vedanta he only differs mostly in fundamentals. According to him the world of experience is not God-made nor a portion of Prakriti (Sankhya) nor purely a subjective experience (Baudhas), nor even a mere illusion (Vedanta). It is real as it is a manifestation of superself or universal consciousness. In support of his theory he introduces the Abhasa Vada, which to define most briefly in his own words:

"All that is i.e. all that can be said to exist in any way and with regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible be it the subject, the object or the means of knowledge or the knowledge itself, is Abhasa."

He further contends that subject and object cannot be divorced from each other, so the self also from the not self. Knowledge of objects is the inter-mixture of the both, if these are treated as separate and opposite entities, there cannot be any concordance between these just as between light and darkness. Hence Abhinavagupta most cogently supplies the answer:—

सर्वाकृतिःविश्वमयः निराकृतिः विश्वोत्तीर्णः

"The (ultimate) in form is immanent and without form is transcendental"[85]

In order to discriminate between His two aspects—transcendental and immanent—Vimarsha is the inevitable instrument, It could have been compared to the image-reflecting nature of a mirror, but during darkness images cannot be reflected, hence it needs external agents to illumine it. But the self does not need any such illuminator and can receive images by virtue of his self—independence "Svatantraya."

This Abhasa in its immanent विश्वमयः aspect is composed of "Prakasha" and "Vimarsha" प्रकाशविमर्शमयः।

In Shaiva terminology by "Prakasha' is meant residual traces also which are essentially the same as their substratum.[87] As has been said above, these images being reflected are the same as Prakasha - the cause of reflection-light-in the ordinary sense. This "Prakasha" is definitely synonymous with "Sanskara". "Vimarsha" may be explained as the power of self to know it—in all its purity and not being obsessed by affections whatsoever.

Abhinavagupta has most successfully made his point in this field by saying:

सर्वाः शक्तिःर्कतृत्वशक्तिऐश्वर्यात्मा समाक्षिपति सा च विमर्शरूपा इति युक्तम् ।

"This Self-Dependence (Svatantraya) faculty is essentially the power of action, which propels the "bliss of consciousness" and that may be taken as Vimarsha, its preponderance is quite appropriate."[88]

This word "Svatantraya" has been given other names also by the Preceptors of Shaivism Vasugupta calls it "Chaitanya"[89] being associated with "Chita" mind. The Spanda school takes it as "Sphurta" or Spanda[90]. It is also called as "Mahasatta" and Paravak.[91] This extraordinary interest in this faculty of "Svatantraya" by Shaiva teachers only proves as to what importance they attach to it. Perhaps it will be pertinent to relate here the conception of "Maya" as propounded by "Shaivas" and what personal contribution has been made by Abhinavagupta to illustrate and explain it.

"Maya" has been treated as a force of obscuration.

तिरोधानंकरी मायाभिधा पुनः

It is more precisely born of the limited experience and so the perception of that universal experience gets blurred hence called "Ashudhavan" the path of impurity, as also the Mayadhavan, the course of Maya.

However, Abhinavagupta, gives a very concise yet pregnant definition of "Maya" by saying that "Maya" is the unmixed part of that transcendental self which engenders he shade of distinction (भेदावभासः) in His "Svatantraya" power bereft of any kind of aids." Moreover this very faculty infatuates (मोह्यति) hence may be equated with Moha (embarrasment). Hence he says (मायाविमोहिनी नाम) (Maya is the name of seduction). By the introduction of the word "Moha" as an equivalent of Maya it becomes very easy for the layman even to understand it in essence, the Moha of Arjuna being very well known.[92] This Maya not only conceals the true nature of things and also self, but the experience of identity with the superself is also obliterated. To bridge the presence of identity of the self with the superself, the Jnana (perception) plays a prominent part.

The Jnana (true perception) has been enunciated as having two aspects, Baudha (intellectual) and Paurusha (spiritual), the latter is the panacea for removing the obscuration because "the experiencer having attained the stage of Highest bliss wh~n his animal instincts have vanished altogether.," finds that kind of perception which can differentiate between the real (यथार्थ) and the unreal (अयथार्थ).[93] Consequently the course of Maya (मायाध्वन्) is replaced by "Transparent course" (शुद्धाध्वन्).[94]

Now the idea of "Moksha" (emancipation) as conceived by the Shaiva sides dervess some mention. While defining "Moksha", Abhinavagupta has to say:—

स्वतन्त्रात्मातिरिक्तस्तु तुच्छोऽतुच्छोपि कश्चन।
न मोक्षो नाम तन्नास्य पृथङ्नामापि गृह्यते।[95]

"The purity of consciousness, devoid of significance or otherwise is not only called "Moksha" but can taken any other name also."

Proceeding further, he explains the consciousness as:

स्वरूपं चात्मनः संवित् नान्यत्।[96]

"The state of consciousness is nothing but Supreme perception."

From the above it is clear that "Moksha" is subjective realization of one's self and is both unilluminable (अप्रकाश्य) by any external agent and unknowable (अज्ञेय) by any means of knowledge.

It is super-transcendental state of experience. The three impurities of Maya (मायीयमलाः) comprising perception, action and innate ignorance (Anava)[97] are to be surpassed as a whole. The predominance of Jnana (perception) is treated as a means of emancipation by other systems of Indian philosophical thought too,[98] but Shaivas do not subscribe to this view intolality. They contend that even if the Jnana impurity is conquered, still the realizer cannot be treated as having been liberated (मुक्त) in real sense of the term, in as much as, the two remaining impurities still persist in him. Hence the perfect freedom according to Trika can be got only through cognition when all these three impurities get dissolved simultaneously into that supreme soul (Samvit)[99]

Finally, the image of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher can remain incomplete if his arguments to refute various theories of Buddhists, Sankhyas, Nai-yayikas and others are not reproduced here. Among the four schools of Buddhistic philosophy only two Sautantrikas and Vijnanvadins have been singled out for criticism by Abhinavagupta,

The first school argues that perception is momentary, since everything is momentary. The object of perception just as a घट (jar) etc. ceases to exist immediately after, casting it reflection on the eye and other sense-organs. By inference it can be established that the object and its reflection cannot co-exist. The one being the cause and the other the effect.[100]

Abhinavagupta proceeds most intelligently to smash this verbose of Buddhist argumentative acumen.

"This external object is prone to perception, if this is not the case then no inference can be drawn even. From the rising smoke the inference of fire is quite clear, but the fire as such has already caught our perception in our kitchen or elsewhere[101]

So it becomes quite clear that object cannot be detached from the subject. If these two are divided, then the question of building abridge from one to another is very difficult.[102]

The Vijnanavadins (sensationalists) do no at ail believe in the existence of the external world. According to them self-consciousness is momentary and proceeds in the form of a chain or a stream. The links in chain are the Vasanas, which generate numerous sensations, called as daily cognitions. Hence a cognition is nothing but a presentiment प्रवृति brought about by Vasana[103]. Abhinavagupta proceeds to refute this theory by vomiting out the contradiction, inherent in this theory in as much as this school of Buddhistic philosophy divider the existentiality in two groups the real (parmartha) and the apparent (संवृति). The Viinana only is real and that is reflected in (आभासते) has only an apparent entity. The learned Shaiva commentator further contends logically that even if the apparent be unreal but its causes or source is to be admitted as real; but how can what is nothing in itself be the cause of something? When the sensationalist brings in the Vasana element he merely repeats what the Bahayarthavadin means by object (अर्थ). How can even Vasana be the cause of presentiments which have no variety in themselves, and if each stream of self-consciousness is different from the rest, if the sensation caused by its own Vasana is exclusive and independent of each other, then each soul will be living in a world of its own and there would be no collaboration of many individuals in respect of the same object for instance carrying a heavy log.[104]

Furthermore, Abbinavagupta proceeds to dismantle the house of sand built by Mimamsakas whose chief exponent is said to be Kumarila Bhatta. His Prakatatavada (प्रकटतावाद) lays down that the relation between the subject and object is brought about by the "movement of the knowing - self and is an object of internal perception." He takes knowledge to mean simply an act of cognizer which engenders (ज्ञानत्ता) perception and (प्रकटता) manifested state in the object.

"ज्ञानं नाम क्रिया, सा च फलानुमेया, फलं च प्रकटताख्यं विषयधर्मः, सव वेद्यता इति कुमारिलः प्रोचुः।"

Abhinavagupta proceeds to remark that Kumarila being a dualist cannot conceive the self-effugent nature of knowledge. If the subject and object have an exclusive existence at the time of cognition and at the stage of manifestation, this is a part of the object exactly as are the other qualities such as blackness, in the case of a jar; but it should be manifest to all and not to a few, as can be inferred from what Kumarila says. In this way, if a jar is made by a potter- its creator— then as the mimamsakas contend it should only become manifest (प्रकट) to him alone. So this theory of (प्रकटतावाद) manifestedness is not tenable as it cannot explain the fact of individual experience.

The Natyayika's theory of knowledge consists in taking it as the illuminator of the object illuminated. The knowledge can be taken as the lamp which makes the object manifest:—

शानस्यार्थप्रकाशत्वं ननु रूपं प्रदीपवत् ।

This example of lamp for knowledge is not appropriate. The lamp shines independently without having any kind of relation with any object it illuminates; knowledge is not so. It cannot be divorced from its antecedents. Moreover while imparting its light to the object actually transfers its own luminosity to it, because as we know that the appearance of the object is dependent on the light, but the Naiyayikas do not hold that knowledge can affect the object, so it cannot hold water in view of the refutation given above. Now we turn over to Sankya system of philosophy which lays down that (बुद्धि) intellect is composed of three qualities—Sattva (transparence), Rajas (mobility) and Tamas (inertia). However, the content of "Sattva" (transparence) is predominant in it, so it is spotless by Nature (स्वभावतः नैर्मल्या). So it can receive reflection on all sides. It is like a mirror wherein the light of self-luminous self within and the reflection of an object outside become one.[106] The बुद्धिवृत्ति (The aid of the intellect) has been refuted by Abhinavagupta as follows:—

The example of mirror and jar on which this theory is based is not correct, because according to this, then the reflecting agent and reflected object should be similar in their nature (स्वभाव साम्य) Actually it is not the case; the ife (intellect) is (सप्राणा) sentient and the other (अप्राणा) insentient. They are definitely opposite to each other. Secondly even Sankhya will never admit that (नैर्मल्यं) (Transparence), of intellect (बुद्धि) is more than that of the self आत्मन्, such as the reflection of a flame in a mirror or that of the sun in the water; it cannot even satisfactorily answer that Buddhi with the light of the Luminous - self does itself become light or not. So the separate identity of (intellect) from the self is never possible, hence this theory does not cut much ice.[108] So his verdict 'जाड्येनार्थप्रकाशता' the insentient cannot have the capacity to manifest the objects, cannot stand any review whatsoever. It is definitely logically true and convincing.

Abhinavagupta does not even spare the "Dualist Shaivas" from his trenchant criticism. According to this Dualistic school of Shaivism[109] whose chief Advocate is Khetapala, the ignorance is a veil which conceals the perfection of self (आवरणात्मना) in respect of powers of knowledge (ज्ञान) and action (क्रिया). Accordingly each soul by its separate variety of power cannot come face to face with that perfection which has been actually hidden by this (power etc.), when this concealing power of ignorance is shattered by Divine grace (शक्तिपातः) in the case of a soul, then only the soul retains its former glory.

Abhinavagupta begins the refutation with a pertinent inquiry as to what can be the reason of the destruction or otherwise of this ignorance. It cannot be action (क्रिया) because it is acknowledged to be the cause of pleasant or unpleasant experience which a person enjoys or suffers. Lord's will cannot be also responsible for this because. He is above partiality. He will not free some and imprison others. The second pertinent query made by Abhinavagupta is to the effect that what and how this ignorance conceals? Souls have been called eternal and unchanging, so ignorance cannot conceal these; if we concede this, then the souls will have to become transitory. If it can affect the changeless souls, then the liberated soul of even "Shiva" cannot remain unaffected by the concealing power of knowledge and action. If this will be the case, the cognition of self can never take place. Hence this theory is not only self-contradictory but also deluding.[110]

In this scholarly way Abhinavagupta has very intelligently pointed to "Achilles heel" inherent in each of these systems of philosophy and has unerringly established the superiority of his faith over all others. He has no mercy, no compunction in riding rough - shod over the "premise" of his rivals. Their seemingly convincing arguments cannot bear the inherent supremacy of his thought as also of his diction, and get melted like snow before the scorching rays of the sun.

Abhinavagupta like a true son of the soil, does not advocate a fanatical devotion to his line of thinking. He allows us every right to differ from him, but the irrestible charisma of his thought, couched in dignified language does definitely enthral us. To speak squarely, he pleads for facing life and not fleeing from it. Like a practical thinker be exhorts us to eschew the meaning of life and afterwards yoke ourselves to redeem it in its truest possible perspective. His positive attitude to life and universe makes the existence more meaningful and hence rewarding.

He does not preach to discard the world and disown its attendant responsibilities, because it is essentially real. He instead of it, asks us to recognize ourselves in the image of the Lord who is not at all different from us. A person ought to develop true perception—heavily attitude for looking at his environment—them only he can recognise Him in himself and become likewise self-effulgent. The distance between the "ideal" and "real" can be easily fathomed by cognition when the mind .is prepared to receive and emit images like an unblurred mirror.

Abhinavagupta performed his mission admirably and saved the humanity from the Jig-saw of intellectual acrobatics of Buddhist theology, culminating in शून्यवाद (nothingness), and in the same way from the Jargon of other systems of Indian philosophy which neither preach practical approach nor practical thinking, only telling us to reject the "present" just to prepare for "future". But Abhinava"gupta affirms the existence of the present and treats it not as a means but as an end itself. Living in the present, taking life as if comes, taming it by the strength of perception and cognition is a sound prescription for the strife- torn world even at present, when its restiveness can easily be converted into quiet calm of super—soul.

His attitude to life and its chief actor-man—is summed up in this couplet; which he has understandably quoted from the Shastras:—

यस्य हस्तौ च पादौ च मनश्चैव च सुसंयतम् ।
विद्या तपश्च शीलं च स तीर्थफलमश्नुते ।।

"He, whose hands, feet, mind. learning, religious austerity and conduct are well balanced (restrained), enjoys the fruits of pilgrimage (even without going there)".

So, this Kashmiri philosopher weaning philosophy away from the mire of impracticability lives up to his name Abhinava (अभिनव). New from all angles, and his thought-provoking treatises breathe an air of ravishing freshness, (अभिनव) even after a lapse of more than ten centuries.

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56. *Ibid.,* Ahnika, I.
57. Paramartha Sara- Karika 4.
58. Ishwar Pratyabhijna III.
59. Paratrimshika Vriti III, 4 (ii).
60. Tantraloka-Ahnika 9.
61. Vijnana Bhairava, 80.
62. Abhinavagupta— Historical and Philosophical Study, p. 22-23.
63. Para Trimshika Vivarna: 16 - 17.
64. Shivadrishti— 118 - 120.
65. First Sangrahasloka.
66. Para Trimshika Vivarna— 282.
67. Shankarabhashya- 8:
68. Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini- II
69. Tantraloka- I, 149
70. Ishwara Pratyabhijna, Vimarshini 1- 208, 209.
71. Tantraloka- I- 50.
72. Tantraloka- I- 7.
73. Ishwara Pratyabhijna. V. 1. 35.
74. Shivadrishti- iv - 118 - 120.
75. Ishwara Pratyabhijna, Karika- 3.
76. Ishwara Pratyabhijna, Vimarshini— 1-20.
77. *Ibid-* p. 20.
78. *Ibid.,* p. 21
79. *Ibid.,* 1, 44.
80. As in the case of Nala and Damayanti, the messenger being "Hamsa."
81. I. P. V. II, 275.
82. I. P. V, 1. 20, 21.
83. I. P. Karika II, 2.

84. I. P. V. II 35-36.
85. I. P. V. 35-36.
86. Tantraloka, Commentary I, 105.
87. Dr. K. C. Pandey. Abhinavagupta—Historical and Philosophical Study, p. 200.
88. I.P.V. I, 198
89. I. P. V. I, 214.
90. Shivasutra I, i.
91. I.P. V. 1, 208.
92. *Ibid.*, I, 209,
93. *Ibid.*, I, 203.
94. Ishwara Pratyabhijna-III, 1, 7.
95. Tantraloka, VI-116 and I. P. V. I, 35.
96. Bhagvadgita, Chapter 11.
97. Tantraloka I-78-79
98. *Ibid.*, VI- 56.
99. *Ibid.*, I, 62.
100. *Ibid.*, I-192.
101. *Ibid.*, vi-60.
102. The Buddhists, Sankhyas etc.
103. Tantraloka I-197
104. I. P. V. I, 166.
105. *Ibid.*, I, 188
106. I. P. V. I, 190.
107. I. P. V. I, 167.
108. I. P. V. I, 174
109. I. P. V. I, 155
110. I. P. V. I, 156
111. I. P. V. I, 77
112. *Ibid.*, 177
113. Tantraloka, Commentary VIII, 49,
114. *Ibid.*, VIII, 30.
115. Gitartha Sangraha 17, 2

CHAPTER 3

ABHINAVAGUPTA—HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

—DR. S.S. TOSHKHANI

Master of Shaiva exegesis and praxis, Abhinavagupta has been hailed as one of the greatest spiritual and intellectual giants India has produced. His brilliant expositions of non-dualist Kashmir Shaivism came as the culmination of a powerful religious and philosophical movement that started at the beginning of the 9th century when the Shivasutras were revealed to the sage Vasugupta. Assuming the dimensions of a full-fledged spiritual renaissance, this movement swept across the whole of Kashmir and held its sway for more than six centuries, extending the frontiers of Indian philosophical thought. The roots of this shaivite renaissance can be traced even further back in time to the 5th century when Kaula, Krama and Trika schools of Agamic Shaivism had begun to evolve along with early Shakta esotericism. What Abhinavagupta did when he appeared on the scene in the middle of the 10th century was to synthesize these systems into an integral vision of monism that led to the emergence of Kashmir Shaivism as one of the most significant developments in the history of Indian spirituality. It were his metaphysical and aesthetical concepts that anchored religious, mystical and ritualistic aspects of the various Shaiva schools of Kashmir in a solid ontological foundation. The flowering of Kashmir Shaiva thought under him was so remarkable that he has come to be regarded as "Hinduism's greatest theologian" and "the emperor of Indic speculation".

It is not our intention in this paper to attempt a detailed discussion on any particular aspect of his philosophical thought. Nor do we look at him as a mere saint or savant in the conventional sense of the word. We will nonetheless, endeavour to provide some peeps into the life and personality of this versatile genius whose brilliance shone forth in fields as varied as aesthetics, dramaturgy, grammar, music and dance besides theology and speculative thought. If Shaivites regard Abhinavagupta as the foremost exponent of their philosophical doctrines and practices, scholars of aesthetics consider him to be "the greatest thinker on the aesthetic theory of India." There is no doubt that Abhinava's thought takes as to a plane where mysticism and aesthetics converge on one another and poetry seems to lead to *moksha, the ultimate goal of life.*

Abhinavagupta was called Abhinavaguptapada for his encyclopaedic range of knowledge and extraordinary spiritual and intellectual attainments, the suffix "*pada*" expressing the great reverence in which he was held. But, says, G.T. Deshpande, the word "*guptapada*" has another connotation as well - it means one having "invisible feet" i.e. a snake. It shows that Abhinava was regarded as an incarnation of Sheshanaga, as was Patanjali, the great Sanskrit grammarian. Abhinavagupta was given this name for his vast command over the Sanskrit language and grammar like him, says Deshpande. According to another story attributed to Mammata, he was called "*guptapada*" because his fellow pupils at school dreaded him like a snake for his brilliant intellect and sharp memory. Whatever the case may be, Abhinavagupta does not appear to have been his real name it was a title given to him by his teachers for his great brilliance. Abhinava has himself hinted at this in 'Tantraloka', his magnum opus. While referring to himself as the author he says :

"Abhinavaguptasya kritih seyam yasyodita gurubhirakhya". ["This is Abhinavagupta's work who was given this name by teachers (or elders)".]

The name implies authoritativeness, says Dr. Navjivan Rastogi quoting Jayaratha, the commentator of 'Tantraloka', and Abhinavagupta appears to have been quite aware of this implication. That he was no ordinary human being but a spiritual master of the highest order is evident from the belief surrounding his physical birth itself, according to which was *yoginibhu*, that is one born of a *yogini*. Explaining the concept, Dr. Rastogi says : "where parents unite identifying themselves with Shiva and Shakti giving to progeny, the latter who is Shiva-incarnate and instant repository of knowledge is designated as Yoginibhu."

There was another Abhinavagupta whose name has been mentioned by Madhavacharya in his "Shankaradigvijya", a work celebrating the great Shankaracharya's victories in theological debates. But this Abhinavagupta lived in Assam and was a Shakta by faith. Madhavacharya tells us that he had written a *Shkhabhashya* on Vedanta Sutras and was defeated by Shankara in argument at Kamrup. Obviously, he was a contemporary of Shankara who is said to have lived between 780 to 820 CE, and should in no way be confused with our Kashmiri Abhinavagupta who was a Shaiva and lived in the 10th century.

It is rather strange that Kalhana is totally silent about this greatest of shaiva thinkers of Kashmir while he has mentioned the name of Bhatta Kallata, also a Shaiva philosopher, and of Ananda Vardhana, the exponent of the Dhvani theory or the theory of suggestions on whose work "Dhvanyaloka" Abhinava wrote his famous commentary the 'Dhvanyaloka Lochana'. Fortunately for us Abhinavagupta has not shied from giving some important facts of his life. His works 'Tantraloka' and 'Paratrinshika Vivarana are especially packed with biographical material enough for us to get information about his place of origin, parentage, ancestry, teachers pupils and the milieu in which he lived and worked. We can also construe his date, his creative period, the places where some of his works were composed and several other facts of his life from the information he has furnished in his works. Though Abhinava does not furnish us with any direct evidence about his time, he gives us the dates of composition of three of his works making it possible for us to determine the entire span of his creative activity. Thus about 'Krama stotra', said to be his first work, he tells us that it was composed by him in the 'sixty-sixth' year (of the Laukika or Saptarshi era) :

Shatshathike namakevarshe navmyam astie ahni
maya Abhinavagupten margashirshe stutah Shivah

["I, Abhinavagupta, composed this hymn to Shiva on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Margashirsha".]

Obviously, the stotra was composed in the year 4066 of the Saptarshi Era prevalent in Kashmir, which comes to 990 AD. We also learn from him that 'Bhairavastotra' was composed in 4068 Saptarshi Era or 992 AD, and the 'Brihati Vimarshini' (Ishvarapratibhijna Vivritti Vimarshini) in 409 S.E. corresponding to 1015 A.D. Allowing for a margin of five years on each side, and considering that in view of his vast erudition he must have set upon his literary career at the mature age of thirty to thirty five years, Dr. Navjivan Rastogi places Abhinavagupta around 950 - 1020 AD. The Late Prof. Kashi Nath Dhar, pushes his creative period further back by about twenty five years on the plea that the 'Kramastotra' is placed serially at number 13 in the list of his works. It must have taken Abhinavagupta around 25 years in composing the twelve works listed above it, he argues. Calculating on the basis of this assumption and considering that it must have taken him quite some time to learn from the 21 teachers whose names he has given, Prof. Dhar reaches the conclusion that Abhinavagupta must have flourished between 935 AD and 1015 AD. This view deserves consideration and cannot be dismissed offhand.

We can arrive at the approximate time in which Abhinavagupta lived from some other clues as well that we find in the Tantraloka (TA) and Paratrimshika Vivarana (PTV). For instance, we come to know that Karna, the husband of Abhinava's sister Amba, was the grandson- of Vallabha, a minister at the court of king Yashaskara who ruled Kashmir in the year 939 AD. Karna who was one of Abhinava's most favourite pupils, was the son of Shauri, also a minister. Abhinava witnessed karna's death when he was fairly advanced in age and his son Yogeshvaridatta was already grown up. Abhinava, thus "belonged to the third generation from Yashaskara", Dr. Navjivan Rastogi points out, concluding that calculated in this manner to his "accepted data' remains circa 950-1025 AD.

Again from the TA and PTV we learn that Abhinavagupta's earliest known oncestor was Atrigupta who lived in the Antarvedi region of 'Madhydesha' (Uttar Pradesh), which can be identified as Kannauj, under the patronage of king Yashovarman. King Lalitaditya, of Kashmir, who was a great conquerer, defeated Yashovarman during his military expedition to Kannauj. Lalitadity a was so impressed by Atrigupta's great learning that he brought him to Kashmir and requested him to settle there with his family. Abhinavagupta tells us that Lalitaditya granted a large estate go Atrigupta and built a magnificent house for his permanent residence on the banks of the river Vitasta in the town founded by Pravarsen (Pravarpura, modern Srinagar). The house faced the temple of Shiva with a Siddha-linga enshrined in it, which gave the place a sacred ambience. The king granted Atrigupta with enough wealth and property so that he could maintain himself properly. Lavishing praise on Kashmir as "the land of great beauty, learning and eternal bliss" describing Pravarpura (modern Srinagar) as a town as beautiful as Kubera's Alka. After Atrigupta, Abhinava comes straight to his grandfather Varahagupta, saying nothing about his other ancestors who lived in the intervening hundred and fifty years. Varahagupta, we are told, was an erudite scholar and an ardent devotee of Shiva. So wash is son, and Abhinavagupta's father, Narasimhagupta, also known as Chukhulaka. Abhinava has mentioned Narasimhagupta's name at several places with great reverence, for he was not only his father also his first teacher from whom he learnt rudiments of Sanskrit grammar literature and Logic.

It is from Jayaratha, the commentator of Tantraloka, that we come to learn that Abhinava's mother was named Vimala or Vimala kala :

"Asya hi granthakritah Shri Narasimhagupta Vimalakhyau pitarau guruvat. *(Tantraloka Viveka, I.p.*11*)*

Abhinava too has hinted at it in the very first verse of the Tantralokas Vimalakalashraya Abhinava srishti maha janani.

(T.A. I.1)

Abhinava was deeply attached to his mother, a pious and a gentle lady, greatly devoted to Shiva. But she died early and her death came as a great blow to young Abhinava. It also became a turning point in his life. Though he was brought up with tender care and great affection by his father, Abhinava became totally disinterested in worldly affairs and decided to remain a celibate throughout life, shunning the company of the impious and "living a solitary life devoted to quest for truth," as he himself tells us (suta-dara prabhvita bandha-katham naptak). Later, his father, though still young, renounced the world and became an ascetic.

In his works Abhinavagupta has devoted enough space to his family, and also to his pupils and teachers for us to know about them clearly. His family, we get to know, had learning and devotion to Shiva running in the blood. Besides Narasimhagupta and Vimalakala, his parents, it consisted of his paternal uncle Vamanagupta, a brother named Manoratha, sister Amba, and five paternal cousins all of them interested more in the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual attainment than in worldly affairs. Vamanagupta, was a poet and scholar in poetics, and his name has been mentioned by Abhinava in Abhinavabharti, his famous commentary on the Natyashastra, in the context of poetic theory, quoting a verse by him. It is not clear whether Abhinava's brother Manorathagupta and sister Amba were senior to him in years or younger. While the generally held view is that they were younger for they both looked at him as their teacher and took guidance from him in spiritual disciplines, Dr. Navjiva Rastogi is of the opinion that Abhinava might have been the youngest of the three on account of his being regarded as Yoginibhu. However, Manoratha was probably Abhinava's first pupil and also the first to have implored him to write the Tantraloka though others too approached him with the same request. In PTV Abhinava describes Manoratha in glowing terms, praising him for his great devotion to Shiva and for being absorbed in the Shaiva texts. He had a command over "the entire range of Shastras and Tantras", Ashianath tells us. Amba, Abhinava's sister whether younger or elder, considered him to be more of a teacher than a brother, revering him as an embodiment of Shiva. After the death of her husband Karna, she devoted herself to spiritual pursuits under the guidance of Abhinava. On his part, Abhinava too did everything to justify her trust in him. Kama as Abhinava tells us in PTV, was one who understood 'the mystery of the manifestation and maintenance of the world and delighted in "meditation and reflection on and worship of Shiva", abandoning mundane pleasures even at a young age. It was he who along with Mandra beseeched Abhinava "time and again" to write a commentary on the Malini-Vijayotara-Tantra. Kama had a son Yogeshvaridates who "displayed personal qualities justifying his name", and looked to Abhinava for guidance.

Abhinava already seems to have had a small but well knit group of disciples at the time he composed the Tantraloka. Most of them were members of his family or the in-laws of his sister Amba and all of them seemed him with great devotion. We have already mentioned the names of Manoratha and Kama among them. In PTV he has remembered them with great affection and praised them both whole heretedly for their, admirable qualities. He has named several other disciples also who had entreated him to write the Tantraloka. These include Mandra, Kshema, Utpala (not the famous Utpalacharya the exponent of Spanda), his own namesake Abhinava, Chakraka, Padmagupta - all his "*pitravya tanayah*" or paternal cousins - and also Ramagupta and a few others. Kshema is none else than the well-known kshemaraja, Abhinava's cousin and foremost among his pupils who authored the "Pratibhijna Hridayem" and seventeen other works, not all of them on Shiva philosophy but on Tantra and poetics as well. A brilliant "commentator-the logian", he is regarded as the master's most illustrious successor. As for Ramagupta, whose name has been given in the PTV, he was outside the family circle but nonetheless quite brilliant. While the Shaiva shastraas engrossed him the most, he had also mastered grammar, *mimansa* (logos) and *nyaya* (logic).

Mandra too did not belong to Abhinava's family circle. He was the boyhood friend of Karna and also his cousin. Deeply devoted to the worship of Shiva, he was endowed with riches as well as karning and possessed a serial personality. It was Mandra who invited Abhinava to stay at his Subarban residence where he wrote the Tantraloka under the loving care of his (Mandra's) aunt Vatsalika. Vatsalika was the wife of Shauri, a minister of king Jayapida who later resigned to become "a minister of the Lord", Abinava has gratefully acknowledged the care with which Vatsalika looked after him during this period, expressing his gratitude in almost poetic terms.

Born in a family which had a long tradition of learning and devotion to Shiva, Abhinavagupta naturally found the right atmosphere for mental and intellectual development - so essential for him to prepare himself to accomplish the task he was later to undertake. "Every member of the family", a writer Abhinava, "considered material possessions as insignificant and devoted himself to the contemplation of Shiva alone." Abinava himself had an insatiable thirst for knowledge which made him approach almost every teacher he could find in every possible branch of learning that could be studied in his time. For his very first lessons, as we have already said, he sat at the feet of his father Narasimhagupta, and learned grammar, logic and literature. His uncle Vamangupta is said to have been his teacher in poetics, as was Bhatta Tanta. But that was just the beginning, his intellectual pursuits taking him to at least 19 teachers, 21 according to some, whose name he has himself mentioned. There are others also - Mimansa experts, logicians, Buddhists, Vaishnavas etc. - whom he refers to as his teachers in various disciplines though he has not identified them by their names. Dr. Navjivan Rastogi has divided this "glittering galaxy of Abhinavagupta teachers", as he calls them, into two broad groups - Mathikagurus or teachers representing a preceptorial school, and Jnana-gurus or "teachers imparting knowledge in general in some specific area. Prominent among the Mathika gurus were Vamanatha, who taught Abhinava dualistic Tantras, Bhutiraja who was a teacher of dualism-cum-non-dualism and taught Abhinava Brahmavidya among other things. Lakshmanagupta from whom Abhinava took lessons in the entire range of monistic Shaivism of Kashmir, including Krama, Trika and Pratibhijna but excluding Kaula, Shambhunatha who was Abhinava's main guide in the Kula system, and Bhutiraja's son whose name Abhinava has not given but who has been identified by Dr. Rastogi as Heleraja the famous commentator of Bhartihari's Vakyapadiya.

The Brahmavidya that Bhutiraja taught Abhinavagupta, consisted, according to Dr. Rastogi of "such Mantras which if read at the time of death would lead to instant self-realization". While Bhutiraja was a spiritually elevated soul and a celebrated scholar of his time, he was also father of two illustrious scholars, Helaraja and Induraja, the latter being Abhinava's teacher in literary criticism. Lakshmangupta, who belonged to the Traimbaka school of Shaivism, taught Abhinava *Shakta-nyasa* in addition to Trika, Krama and Pratibhijna, as stated above. He had independent views about construction of Mantras and is also said to have authored 'Shrishastra' or 'Sharadatilakatantra', a lost work, Dr. Rastogi informs us. Abhinavagupta refers to him as a great master of '*tantra prakriya*'. *But it was Shambhunatha, his guide in Kula-prakriya* or the Kula-system, whom he holds in highest esteem among all his preceptors. In Tantraloka he is described as the Sun whose rays dispelled "the darkness of ignorance" from Abhinava's heart :

Shri Shambhunatha bhaskara charana nipata prabhapagat sankocham
Abhinavagupta hridambujan etad vichinuta mahesha pujanam heto.

"The lotus of Abhinavagupta's heart got fully bloomed by the rays coming from the Sun in the form of Shri Shambhunatha." Shambhunatha belonged to a spiritual seat of the Ardha - Traiyambaka, school in Jalandhara. Though a master of *Kula-prakriya,* he initiated Abhinavagupta in several spiritual disciplines and praxis and is supposed to have been "the main inspiration" behind the Tantraloka. Writes Dr. Rastogi : Shambhunatha exercised tremendous influence not over Abhinavagupta's knowledge alone but also over his basic approach towards Tantric wisdom and life." Impressed greatly by his fame. Abhinavagupta is said to have journeyed to Jalandhara to acquire knowledge from him.

As for the Jnanagurus, Abhinava studied from them mainly those subjects that were not religious in content. He has mentioned their names but has not stated what he precisely learnt from them. Those who figure in this category include Shrichandra, Bhava (bhuti?), Bhaktivilasa, Dharmashiva, Vamanaka, Udbhata and Bhaskara - all scholars of a high order. He has also mentioned the name of one Matanga from whom he studied the Matanga Agama. This, however, does not exhaust the list of Abhinava's teachers for he has referred to many others, with outgiving their names, from whom he learnt various other subjects. These include teachers who contributed to his knowledge of Buddhist, Jaina and Vaishnava Love as well as the doctrines of Siddhanta Shaivism. It was after attending upon so many teachers for lessons in different branches of knowledge that Abhinava became fully equipped mentally, intellectually and spiritually to undertake the task that lay before him and to explore reality on his own. But his insatiable thirst for knowledge which took him from one teacher to another drew flake from some conservative and traditionalist circles. Abhinava countered by reasserting his deepest faith in the doctrines of Shripurvashastra or the Malinivijaya Tantra, the most authoritative text of Kashmir Shaivism, and at the same time making it plain to his critics that he saw nothing wrong in going from teacher to teacher to acquire knowledge in the same way as black-bee goes from flower to flower to gatherscent. One may be fortunate enough to find a guide quite capable to make one attain perfection, but there is no reason why one should not go to different guides to obtain knowledge in otherfields, he argued.

What Abhinava is trying to stress actually is the signifiance of one's own experience as a factor in the attainment of spiritual knowledge. The other two factors, according to him are the teachers and the scripture. While regarding insights acquired from the teacher (Gurutah) and the scripture (Shastratah) as of fundamental importance he makes it clear that it is, essentially experience (Svatah) that leads to in the field. As though to underscore this point he says while introducing the scheme of things explained in the Tantraloka :

"Being prompted by Lord Shiva, I am explaining this on the basis of my experience, logical argument, and the Shiva Shastra".

One cannot fail to note the precedence he gives here to self experience over other things in the exegetical scheme of his most important work. He refers to his spiritual experiences at several other places in Tantraloka also. In fact, everything that he wrote "had the force not only of the Shastra but also of his experience" as G.T. Deshpande points out. He could produce monumental work like the Tantraloka only become he had personally experrimented with the rituals of the Krama and Kaula systems of Shaivism is certainly because of this that his words came to acquire an authoritative ring about them and he came to be recognize as the greatest master of all the shaiva schools that existed in Kashmir.

But it was not only the theoretical knowledge of Shaiva thought, of which Abhinavagupta was the greatest exponent, that won him universal reverence, he was no arm chair philosopher for that. He became legendary figure in the field of spirituality because of the extraordinary powers that he is said to have acquired through constant practice of Shaivayoga. According to Yogaraja the commentator of

Parmarthasara, he had attained Bhairavahood, which in Shaiva terminology is equivalent to the state of a *jivanmukta* or one who is liberated inlife. In Tantraloka, Abhinava refers to 'Shriparvashastra' to identify the signs by which a yogi endowed with *shaktipata* can be recognised. Jagratha, the commentator of Tantraloka avers that Abhinavgupta himself possessed all these signs, viz. an unflinching devotion to God, the power of Mantras, control over elements, capacity to achieve desired result, sudden and spontaneous knowledge of all shastras and a sudden burst of poetic creativity. Madhuraja Yogi, an itinerant ascetic from South India came all the way to Kashmir to see the great Abhinavagupta in person. He wrote a eulogy of his master entitled 'Gurunathaparamarsha' testifying to his miraculous spiritual powers on the basis of his own experience. It was through Ashiana's power of Shaktipata, Madhuraja suggests, that he attained self realization. He also refers to a congregation of great spiritual personalities, Siddhas and Yogini, in Kashmir at which Abhinava was recognized as the 'spiritual head of all the Shaiva sects - Siddhanta, Vama, Yamala, Bhairava, Kula, Trika and Ehavira for his great powers and brilliant expositons. In his Dhyana/Shlokas Madhuraja paints this masterly pen potrait of his Guru Abhinavagupta:

"May the God Dakshinamurti in the form of Abhinava who is an incarnation of Shrikantha and has come to Kashmir, protect us. His eyes are rolling with spiritual bliss. The centre of his forehead is clearly marked with three lines drawn with sacred ashe (*bhasman*). His ears look beautiful with Rudraksha. His luxuriant hair is tied with a garland of flowers. His beard is long. His body is rosy. His neck black because of being besmeared with paste of camphor, musk, sandal, saffron etc. Looks splendid. His long sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) is left loose. He is dressed in silk cloth, while like rays of moon and is sitting in the yogic pasture called *vira* (*virasana*) on a soft cushion over a throne of gold, with a canopy decked with strings of pearls, in the open hall full of crystals, beautiful with paintings, smelling extremely sweet on account of garlands and flowers, incense and lamps, perfumed with sandel etc. constantly resonant with vocal and instrumental music and dance and crowded with Yoginis and Siddhas of recognized spiritual powers in the centre of the garden of grapes. He is attended by all his pupils such as Kshemaraja who are sitting with their mind concentrated, at the foot, and are writing down all that he says, and by the female messengers (*duti*), who are standing at the sides, each with a jar of water distvilled from the grain kept soaked in water for three nights (*shiva rasa*), and a box full of betels in the right hand and the fruit of citron and lotus in the left. His right hand wearing the resang of Rudrakshas is resting on his thigh and his fingers are in a position indicative of the grasp of ultimate reality (*jnanamudra*), and he is playing upon the Vina which is capable of producing original musical sound *(nada)* with the tips of the nails of his lotus. Like left hand. (English rendering by Dr. K.C. Pande, Abhinavagupta, p. 21)

The congregation of "great spiritualists" depicted in these Dhyana shlokas shows Abhinava in his familiar milleu. Nobody has described when and how exactly he left his mortal coil, but tradition has it that when he felt that he had accomplished his task, he went to the Bhairava (present day Beerawa) cave in Kashmir one day with a retenue of 1200 disciples. Chanting his favourite Bhairava stotra he entered the cave alone, asking his disciples to stay behind. Nothing was heard of his thereafter.

A prolific writer, Abhinavagupta wrote extensively on all areas of Shaiva thought and ritual right when he was about thirty or thirtyfive. Dr. K.C. Pandey, has divided the span of his literary activity into three peridos - the *Tantrika* period, the *Alankarika* period and the philosophical period. Most other scholars have followed these divisoins, but to Paul E. Murphy, the author of 'Triadic Mysticism', these divisions do not appear to be logical. During the Tantric period, Murphy points out, Abhinava also showed much involvement with philosophy and in the so-called philosophical period much that came from his pea was Tantric in content. To some extent. One is inclined to agree with Murphy who while following Pande's chronological order, names the three periods as initial or First Theological period, Intermediate or Poetic Period and Final or Second Theological period. In the first period of his creativity, Abhinavagupta dealt with Krama or the Gradation system and wrote the Krama Stotra (Gradation Hymn) and Kramakeli (Gradation Frolic). The latter was Abhinava's commentary on an earlier Krama Stotra, but is now lost. Together the two works establish Abhinava as a commentator on the Krama school of Agamic Shaivism. "Krama," Dr. Navjivan Rastogi has pointed out, "was his first love in philosophy". Abhinava turned to Krama at a time when his mind was "restless" and went quite for in experimenting in the system to attain perfection in it, dwelling on the concept of twelve Kalis as twelve evolutionary stages in the flow of energy. "But for Abhinava's Kramakeli", writes Dr. Rastogi, the early history of the system would have remained the "pre history for the modern student". During this (i.e the first) preriod Abhivana also wrote Purna Panchika, which is now lost and is said to have been a detailed exposition of the Malimvijaya Tantra (MVT), one of the cure text of the Shaiva thought of Kashmir. Boddhapancha-Shika, Abhinava's first dated work, also belongs to this period. He is a text of fifteen or rather sixteen verses, with the first fifteen verses presenting the basic principles of monistic shaivism and the last giving the purpose of its composition which was to help his less inteligent students to grasp the fundamental tenets of the Philosphy.

Abhinava enriched the kula system in no less a measure than the Krama system, though there is a close affinity between the two with Krama eventually culminating in Kula and Abhinava seeming to be more inclined towards Kula. His two most important works in this context are the Malini Vijayavartikarm (MVV) and the commentory Paratrimsika Vivarana (PTV). Abhinava wrote the MVV as commentary on the Malini Vijaya Tentra also known Shripurvashastra, at the specific request of his two favourite pupils, Mandva and Kama. Unfortunately the complete work is not available, the published part of it being Abhinava's commentary only on the first verse of MVT. The Paratrimshika Vivarana or Paratrishika Vivarana as Abhinava liked to call it, consists of Abhinava's commentary on the concluding thirtysix verses of the Rudrayamala Tantra, and presents, in fact, its essence. *Paratrishika,* according to Abhinava means "the Supreme Goddess who transcends and is identical with the Trinity (Trika)". The "Trinity" or the "Three" refers to the three *shaktis, iccha* (will), *jnana* (knowledge) and *kriya* (action), or *para, paratpara* and *apara.* The Paratrishika has also been called Anuttarasutra or the Trikasutra and is considered to be the "index to the entire subject-matter of Trika system". Along with the M.V.T. it is one of the most important Shaiva texts but also abstrute "*Paravak*" or the supreme word to be identical with the Divine consciousness, and hence a very letter or word is derived from this consciousness, says Betting Baumer, explaining its basic concepts elaborated by Abhinava. "Mantra and the whole metaphysics of the word is at the centre of the text, she writes in her preface to Jaideva Singh's English translation of it." The Paratrishika Vivarana explains the interrelatedness and oneness of all things as an expresion of the freedom of the Divine", she adds.

But it is the monumental Tantraloka or the light on the Tantras in which Abhinavgupta's genius finds the best expression. Written in the house of Mandra located in the eastern parts of modern Srinagar (ancient Pravara pura), it is a vast and expansive work consisting of thirty seven Ahnikas chapters which run into twelve volumes with the commentary of Jayaratha: Regarded as Abhinava's masterpiece, it is the greatest single "extra-comprehensive" work which preserves and presents kashmir-shaiva thought and practice fully and entirely central theme revolving round the transcendental and absolute reality called Anuttara (literally meaniing 'beyond which there is nothing'). As mark S.G. Dyczkowski puts it, "If not the most important, certainly one of the most important works of Tantric Hinduism, it reads as an expositon of Shaivagamic ritual and practice couched in the monistic philosphy of Kashmiri Shaivism (i.e. the Pratyabhijna)". Dyczkouski further say's that Abhinava in his Tantraloka introduced "a unified exegetical scheme which brings together what he saw as the essential elements of all shaiva ritual and practice."

While Tantraloka or the light on the Tantras was the epitome of Abhinava's works, it was followed by its three summaries by Abhinava himself viz. the Tantrasara (the Essence of the Tantras), Tantrocchaya (the Gathering of the Tantras) and the Tantravatadhanika (the seed of the Tantra Banyan.

During the intermediate or second period of his literary activity, Abhinava seems more interested in aesthetics and dramaturgy. Among his most famous works of this period are the Abhinava Bharti, a commentary on Bharata's Natyashastra, and the Dhvanyaloka Lochana (DL), commentary on Ananda-Vardhana's Dhvanyaloka. He is also said to have written a commentary on Kavyakautuka, a work written by his teacher in literary aesthetics, Bhatta Tauta, known as Kavya Kautuka Vivarana, which is now lost. In DL, Abhinavagupta integrated Anand Vardhana's theory of Dhvanor poetic suggestion with the Rasaehory firmly stabilizing the Rasa-Dhavari school as the "New School" of Indian aesthetics with its emphasis suggestion, imagination and sensibility. Based on Shaiva metaphysics, it presents Indian aesthetic thought in the final stage of its movement towards detachment and liberation which come from aesthetic expression.

During the third and final period of his literary career, Abhinavagupta a gain turned to philosophical and theological writings. He wrote two important commentaries on Utpala's shvarapratyabhijna karika, one relatively shorter, known as the *Laghvi Vimarshini* and the second extensive one called the *Brihati Vimarshini.* The shorter commentary the Shuva Pratyabhina Vimarshini deals with various aspects of *pratyabhijna* or the Doctrine of Recognition which is regarded as the philosophy proper of the monistic Shaivism of Kashmir.

The longer one or the Ishvaraprtyabhijna vivritti Vimarshini is a commentary on Utpalacharya's own commentary on his Pratyabhijna Karika, which unfortunately is not available.

Other major works assigned to this period include the Bhagvadgitartha Sangraha, a compendium on the Gita with a Shaiva interpretation given to its verses, and the Paramarthasara, which presents the essence of the basic doctrines of the Trika system.

As many as fortyfour works are known to have come from Abhinava's prolific pen, of which twenty three have been published so far-twelve of them in the Kashmir Sanskrit Texts Series. These include the Paryanta panchika which to a presents an essence of the basic tenets of the Trika philosophy. The work was first published by Dr. V. Raghavan in 1951.

In addition to these, Dr. K.C. Pandey has given a list of the nine minor works of Abhinavagupta in the Appendix of his well known book on the Shaiva master. These include Annurashtika, Paramartha Dvadashika, Krama Stotram, Bhairava Stotram, Anubhava Nivedanamand Dehasthadevata Chakram. The last named stotram praises the physical body as an abode of spirituality, with each constituent organ having a particular divinity stationed in it. Dr. Navjivan Rastogi refers to one more work, which has been referred to by Abhinava in the Tantraloka and identified by Jayaratha as the Prakirnakavivarna. As the word *Prakirnaka* implies "miscellaneous" this work appears to have dealt with several relevant miscellaneous issues, not necessarily philosophical, but having philosophical implications".

Through these writings Abhinavagupta elaborated and interpreted the ideas and concepts mainly found within the fold of Kashmiri Shaivism securing for them firm ontological foundation and building on them a coherent and well-reasoned philosophical system. Integrating, the non-dualist notions of the earlier Agamia schools of Krama Kaula and Trika into a monistic vision of reality, Abhinava synthesized them with the philosophical notions supplied by the Pratyabhijna and Spanda schools to give an authoritative and unambiguous expositoin to the fundamental tenets of non-dualist Kashmir Shaivism. It were Somananda, the author of *Sivadrishti* (Vision of Shiva), and Utpaldeva his son and disciple who authored the Ishvara pratyabhijna Karika (from whih the pratyabhijna school derived its name) on the one hand and Vasugupta and Kallata Bhatta, the authors of the Shiva Sutras (considered to be a revelatoin) and

Spandakarika respectively, who initially triggered the new philosophical developments, but it was in Abhinavagupta that all the schools of Kashmir Shaivism found their greatest intrepreter, supporting as he did with sound arguments the theoretical constructions they evolved authenticating them with his own personal experience. While Somananda concerned himself with refuting dualist schools of Hindu philosophy, Utpaldeva built up the Pratyabhijna "as a critique of the Buddhist doctrine of *anatmavada* ('no-self')", as Dyczkowski points out. Abhinava achieved a sort of synthesis between the two basic notions of *pratyabhijna* or recognition of one's true identity with Shiva or pure consciousness, and Spanda or the contemplative experience of the Vibration or "pulse of consciousness," according equal prominence to both in his teaching. He developed all the Shaiva systems in a way that one system could be understood and explained in terms of the other systems. This synthesis came to eventually represent the focal point of what can be called the integrated vision of monistic Shaivism of Kashmir.

Within the context of Kashmir Shaivism Abhinavagupta reflects on issues like the nature of reality, the relationship of the absolute and its myriad in manifestations, and the relationship between God, man and nature. According to Abhinavagupta the Ultimate Reality or the absolute is pure, undivided universal consciousness to recognise one's identity with whom is to experience the bliss of realization. It is this recognition that is identical with ultimate liberation. But while maintaining the one-ness or non-duality of the absolute consciousness, he rejects the idea that diversity has no existence. According to him the one reality manifests itself as both unity and diversity—all the diversity of the phenomenal world does not exist separated from the absolute. Nothing exists, in his view apart from the one who is all the All. The multiplicity of manifestation does not stand outside Supreme Reality of the one from who omniformity nothing can be excluded. The one reality thus is manifest as many, the perception of distinction between various phenomenal entities being only external. Writes Abhinava : "While there is (an external) difference between phenomena, there is none (inwardly.), established as they are in their non essential nature". Abhinava belives that everything has a plae in the totality of the ones universal, consciousness. The core of Abhinava's thinking as of other Kashmir Shaiva thinkers on the nature of reality is that everything "resides within one absolute consciousness, as it is "*purna*" or full of all things which are sustained by it as thin its all embracing, infinite nature. This can be realised

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either by merging the external world into the inner consciousness or by lovling upon the external as the gross form of the inner Abhinava's viewpoint reality can be described as "*Chidanaadeghana*" or "compact mass of consciousness and bliss."

Representing the Kashmir Shaiva approach to the nature of the absolute, Abhinavagupta rejects the idea that the universe is unreal or less than real, as the Vedantist believes. The Absolute Brahman cannot be the real basis of "an unreal projection or illusion". The universe acording to the Shaiva conception of things, is real because it is the creation of pure consciousness. Shiva is both *Vishvottirna* or transcendented, according the Kashmir Shaivite and *Vishvamaya* or immanent in all things. The distinction between duality and non-duality is a creation of Maya, not as an illusion but as the creative energy of Shiva. Affirming the reality of the world and of *Vyavahara* or daily life, Abhinava says that all things are apparent because they "rest within consciousness". Abhinava presents this as a fact of our daily experience. If practical life, he points out, "which is useful to all persons at all times, places and conditions were not real, then there would be nothing left which could be said to be real."

This leads us to another core concept of Kashmir Shaivism *abhasvada* the 'theory of appearances' which Abhinava too bases his approach to 'Being'. Everything that appears, according to this theory, that is all manifestation is identified with the all-inclusive universal consciousness and is an appearance (abhasa) of the manifested form of the absolute. Appearances are like the waves of the ocean or like reflections in the mirror, and so cannot be said to have an independent existence. They are semblances but they have a real basis. It is this way that Shaivism chooses to explain the so-called change that transforms the absolute into the phenomenal world. Writes G.I. Deshpande; "The ideas of unity and multiplicity, of time and space, and of name and form are based upon certain ways and forms in which the ultimate appears." These diverse appearancces (abhyasa) do not in any way compromise the oneness of the absolute. But though an object may not actually undergo any change, it is perceived differently by different persevers, and this accounts for the variety of experience we have. it is the inclination of the perceivers, Ashinava points out, that is the crucial factor, illustrating his point by the example of a golden jar. which a depressed person sees the jar, he merely perceives it as an appearance that exists; someone who wants to fetch water perceives the appearance as a jar; to a man who wants it takes somewhere and then brought back, it is a 'thing, the man who desires money sees it as 'gold'; one who wants to see a pleasing object perceives it as brightness, and a person who wants something solid perceives it as "hardness". Thus, according to Abhinava all semblances are real as they have a base in a consciousness that is nothing but real.

Abhinavagupta, and other Shaiva masters like Utpaladeva, represent Shiva or the absolute as self-luminous light (*prakasha*) and its reflective awareness (*vimarsha*). As the vibrant light of univeral consciousness shines, it makes all things manifest, unfolding all the categories of existence. However it is not a passive but 'living light' which reflects upn its own nature and forms the substratum of all that is manifested. Writes Abhinava :

"He illumines, luminous with his own light, in identity with himself, and because He illumines Himself, so too he reflects on his own nature, without his wonder (chamatara) being in any way diminished." (Paratrishika Vivarana).

Being absolute, this light is free from all limitations and because of this absolute freedom assumes myriad forms. It is a supre "Supremely real light", Abhinava explains, which has but only one characteristic, namely consciousness which is the perfect medician of reflection like a mirror it can reflect within itself objects which appear to be separate from one another, but have actually been deposited in it by "the original external object", which itself is a reflection. It is through reflective awareness, or *Vimarsha*, that *Prakasha* or the tight of cousciousness known itself as the only reality.

According to Kashmiri Shaivism Being and Becoming form two faces, internal and external, of univeral consciousness and the transition of the one to the other is a perpetual process (*satatudita*). There is actually no difference between the "inner" and the "outer". It is Maya as the creative power of the absolute that makes them appear as separate subject and object diverse forms. The movement from the inner to the outer creates the world of subjects and objects while its reversal leads to the withdrawal of the object. Actually, through the absolute appears to be in a state of constant transformation, through its *spanda* or vibration, no movement as such takes place. Abhinava calls 'vibration' subtle movement :

"By vibration (*spandana*) [we mean] subtle movement. It is subtle [in the sense that] although it moves not, it manifests as motion". (*Ishvarapratyabhijna Vimarshini*)

There are two phases of this pulsation or vibration, as we have printed out from inner to outer and outer to inner which correspond to the process of self limitation of consciousness or its coagulation (*rodhana*) and the dissolution (dravana) of the gross into subtler forms of consciousness. The former is a process of descent into matter and the latter a process of ascent towards liberation, as Mark S. Dyczhowsta', explains. Matter thus is a congealed form of unlimited consciousness. This what Abhinavagupta points to when he says that the universal consciousness has "contracted" and congealed" to assume the forms of finite, limited human beings", stressing the basic interconnectedness of life, he considers the recognition of one's true inner nature or Shiva to be the goal of life.

Abhinavagupta shares with other non-dualist Shaiva thinkers the idea of the cosmic union between Shiva and Shakti, the two-entities who actually personity two aspects of one and the same, indivisible entity – the conscious and the active one "personified". Says Abhinava in his Para-trishika Vivarana : "It is impossible to conceive any difference, which could (separate) Shakti from Shiva. The pulse of their separation and union leads to the creation and destruction of the universe. As Natalia "from early vedanta to kashmir Shaivism", Isayeva has said in her book n this unoin of two universal entities, is concieved as a constant 'vibration', 'pulsation' or inner ''thoob' (spanda, sphuratta), which, becomes the foundation for the evolution of the created world.

Abhinavagupta has used the structure of the Sanskrit langauge "as a calculus to explain divine creativity", to use the words of Dr. Paul Muller - Ortoga, the author of The Triadic Heart of Shiva'. In his 'Para-trishika-Vivarna', as we have pointed out earlier, Abhinava gupta identifies the divine consciousness with the supreme word or *para vak,* regarding each letter or word as derived from and ultimately inseparable from this consciousness. With the word being at the centre of his philosophy of language, he has analysed speech in terms of its gradual descent from an "undifferentiated, transcendental level to the differentiated gross level" in its *para, pashyanti, madhyama* and *vaikhari* stages. Referring to Abhinavagupta's Natalla Isayeva, well-known Russian scholar writes : "In the third chapter of Abhinavagupta's treatise *Tantra-aloka* we find the image of the gradual evolution of the divine power into the world. 'Mother Shakti' is undergoing transformations and evolving into created universe through a series of intermediate stages. It creates the world while itself assuming the various forms of the sounds and the letters of the

Sanskrit alphabet. The vowels and the consonants are represented as manifold variations of an inner vibration which is inherent in Shiva's own consciousness, at the same time they are presumed to be actually existing in the form of definitely shaped and fixed stages in the gradual creation (srishti) of the external world."

We shall not comment here on Abhinava's, contribution to Indian aesthetics as it does not fall within the purview of our present study, his exposition of the Shanta Rasa as "the basic Rasa" is, however, important to be noted. Why should it not be possible to presents, he asks the mental state (whatever that may be) responsible for attaining Moksha to be aesthetically relished in the same manner as Shrinagar, Vira etc. As for *Moksha* defines it as expansion of one's consciousness : "Mokshohi nama naivanyah swarupa-prathnam hi tat." How sad it is that at a time when Western as well as Indian scholars like Andre Padouk, Teun Gaurdian, Paul E. Muller-Ortega, Alexis Sanderson, Silvia Silburn, Reffade Torcella, Navjiwan Rastogi, and, Betina Baunex, Natalia Isayeva are devoting their lives to the study of Abhinavagupta, Abhinavan thought is being ignored and forgotten, in the land of his birth.

CHAPTER 4

LALLESHWARI—AN APOSTLE OF HUMAN VALUES

—PROF. K.N. DHAR

Cultural heritage of a country borrows measured sustenance from the philosophy of life nurtured inch by inch, by its denizens from the time, man awoke to the consciousness of self and spirit. It may well be called the culmination of the quest of man from finite moorings to infinite dimensions. At the same time, this search of man for finding his feet on the spiritual plane, can in no way be the last word on this subject, since such pursuits are cumulative in character and content. This edifice comes into being brick by brick, hammered into proper shape by savants and saints from time to time. However, it calls for reinterpretation every day in and out. So that the erring human being, with all his frailties, is not derailed into the abyss of animality. Perhaps this is the veritable theme of the famous word of Lord Krsna in Gita "when vice prevails and virtue dwindles, I resurrect my own being for prefering refuge to the virtuous and annihilating vice completely; thus reestablishing human values in every age".[1] In our happy valley Lalleshwari most charitably projected such human values, so dear to Kashmiri from the dawn of history. An irrefutable proof of this attitude of conciliation instead of confrontation can be gleaned from the pages of Nilamata Purana wherein Lord Buddha has been acknowledged as an incarnation of God—'Avatara'[2], a Buddhism, to speak squarely, was essentially a revolt against Brahmanism, yet the catholic Brahmin with his proverbial forbearance did not use the same language or adopt the same attitude as the Buddhists had employed with respect to

Brahmanism. The healthy approach of Kashmiri Brahmins was never negative in essence but purely positive. So, we can safely assert that Lalleshwari, a vigilant sentinel of Kashmiri culture displayed highest magnitude of courage and foresight in those not very auspicious times beckoning man not to discriminate on the basis of religious labels:—

"मो जान ह्योंद त मुसलमान"

It was actually the continuation of that catholic attitude of mind displayed by Kashmiris from times immemorial.

However, time does not maintain a uniform tenor or temper, It is at timer moody and capricious; and when the political map of Kashmir was redrawn in the fourteenth century by the induction of sultans over the Kashmir scene, this accommodation of head and heart received a jolt.[3] Kashmiris became oblivious of their pristine past; present consequently got divorced from it, mutilating its brilliant face and its attendant decorum. During those unsavoury and all the more unpalatable times, Lalleshwari fortified to her marrow by the innate strength of her conviction, rose to the occasion and strove hard put to an end to this dismal era of persecution and vandalism. In this crusade her tools were not abjuration but affirmation; bitterness changed hands with sweet and more persuasive compromise. Having elected to tread this path of self-suffering, she became a model for millions of her countrymen to abjure the mundane and propitiate the sublime. It was no less than a miracle by which the sufferings of the people lost their sting and they learnt to bear up with these with stoical resistance. They were exhorted to rise above the self and reach up to the super-self at which stage pleasure or pain have no relevance or meaning. Some say[4] it was self-deceit, fleeing from the actual life, rather self-forget-fulness to feel shy of the stark realities of life. The most apt answer to this faulty assertion is provided by ever-awake Lalleshwari herself in these words:-

गाल कुड़िनम बोल परिनम
द,पनम ति यस युथ रु.चे।
सहज़ कोंसमव पूज़ करिनम
ब़ अमि लानि कस क्याह मो.चे।।[5]

"Some may heap cavil on me, even some may curse me; They may say whatever they like to say. Some may worship me with the flowers of inherent cognition; yet I do not feel ruffled with this kind of impeachment or praise, since I am concerned with my own self and do not grudge what others have to say about me."

Muslim rule over Kashmir, for reasons obvious, sounded the knell for the use and propagation of Sanskrit language. Bilhana, the famous lyricist of Kashmir had once boasted that, "In their house- hold the Kashmiri women even speak Sanskrit and prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue.[6]" It was now an old wooden story. However, a bridge was to be built between the present and the past for which Sanskrit had been a very potent instrument; but the general public had lost contact with it. Persian was the order of the day in its stead. So, Lalleshwari chose to speak to the people in their own idiom; hence Kashmiri became the vehicle of her message. In this way, she did not only make her message more intelligible and comprehensible to the masses, but also achieved the purpose of bridging the gulf between the past and the present. Present is an improved version of the past providing the base on which future can be built. In her time the friction between the past and the present was the loudest; hence, she like an expert alchemist, by her healing touch saved Kashmiri culture from being eroded and bruised. Her clarion call to assimilate human values in those dark days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean achievement on her part in uniting the lost children of one God, when every effort was being made to segregate them from each other. Her message was so universal and appealing that the tallest of Muslim Reshis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words:-

तस पदमानपोरिचि लल्ले
तम गले अमरय्थ च्यवो।
सों सानी अवतार लोंले
तिथिय म्य वर दितम दिवो।।[7]

"That Lalla of Padmpur (Pampur) was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she won our adoration as an incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Lalla's message couched in quartrains called 'Vaks' is very simple and straight bereft of any curves or terseness. It is actually an exhortation to man to indulge in self-cognition. It is a ready-made manual on self-education and consequent self-consciousness.

"I felt fatigued by incessant self-search, thinking that no body could partake of that hidden perceptive knowledge; I, ultimately got immersed into it and could find admission to the Divine-bar; therein the goblets are full to the brim, but none possesses the nerve to drink these."

Mental drill is preamble to self-consciousness. At that pinnacle of self-discipline mind gets tamed automatically effortlessly :-

"The steed of mind gallops through the sky, encompassing this whole universe. During the twinkling of an eye it can traverse millions of miles. He, who is proficient enough to put it on rails by controlling its reins, check its wayward demeanour by clipping its wings in the shape of mastering his own inhalation and exhalation can attain the stage of self-cognition."

Worship, in the words of Lalla connotes self-introspection. It has nothing to do with external paraphernalia:-

मन पुश तै यछ़ पूशांनी
बावक कोसम लागज़स पूजे।
शिव गो'ड़ दिज्य'स अश' वाने
छोपि मन्तर शंकर वुज़े।।[10]

"Mind is the flowerseller and faith the flowers. Worship should be undertaken with the offerings of mental equipoise. Shiva is to be given a bath of tears. Incantations are to be recited in silence, without making a show of these. In this way only self-consciousness can be awakened from within."

According to Lalleshwari a realizer has to hammer out his mental attitude on these lines:-

नर त, पान य,म सोंमुय मोन
य,म ह'युवुय मोन द्यन क्ह'यो राथ।

यॅमसॅय अद्व'यी मन सपुन
तॅमी ड़्यूठुय सु गो'र नाथ।।[11]

"He, who considers his own self and others as alike, abjures distinction between 'I' and 'you'. He, who treats days and nights alike; is undisturbed by pleasure or pain. He, whose mind is bereft of duality, whose heart beats for all alike; only such a realizer can perceive the highest of preceptors-Shiva."

But, that Shiva is within the self of the realizer, as inseparable from it as the smell from the flower. Immanence is self and transcendence is super-self-shiva in the language of Kashmiri monastic Shaivacharyas:-

कोह छुक चेटान अन्यथा वछ़
त्रुकुय छुक त, अन्दर अछ।
शिव छुय अ'ति तै कुन मो गछ़
स'हज़, कथि म्यानि करतो पछ।।[12]

"Why do you beat your breast for nothing ? If you possess unwavering intelligence, you shall have to seek Him from within, Shiva is seated there and searching Him from outside will be of no avail. Do believe my word, baked with self-perception."

Without beating about the bush, it can be safely asserted that Lalleshwari's forte was Kashmiri Shaivism. This concept of Kashmirian philosophy actually revolutionized the age-long attitude of man, more so of the Brahmins. It advocates a casteless society[13] as also abhors Kitchen- puritanism.[14] Hindu society ailing through its own defective approach, justified such a kind of major operation for instilling evergreen health into its rusty veins. Shaiva scholars of Kashmir diagnosed the disease rightly and prescribed such an elixir for its longevity which defied the time with its nihilistic red claws. Had not this philosophy of life been at hand to the Kashmiris to that dismal hour of history, no Hindu worth the name, would have survived in the Land of 'Kashyapa', alien culture would have made an easy morsel of him. Lalla's 'Vaks' are actually a Kashmiri rendering of shiva- sutras;[15] When this philosophy was born, no such predicament was there, as was faced by Lalleshwari in her own times later on. At best, shaivas had to contend with the Buddhists[16], whose attitude was also homespun and not foreign in an way. Hence, Lalla had to reclaim the lost faith of her brethren, provide a viable alternative to the enticements an alien faith was offering to the people at large; and at the same time, in performing this double duty, she had to be always cross-fingered, not invite the wrath of the rulers. It definitely goes to her credit that while discharging her mission, she did not make a single enemy out of the other camp. To crown all her message did cut through the man-made barriers religions, Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration; consequently it multiplied her friends. Her ingenuity in steering safe between the two antagonistic factions is unsurpassed. She was instrumental in replacing call to steel by call to human conscience, consequently changing sourness to sweetness:-

अ'सि आस त, अ'सि आसव
अ'सी दोर करि पतवथ।

शिवस सोरि न, ज्योंन त, मरुन
रवस सोरि न, अत, गथ।।[17]

"We human beings, did live in the past and we alone will be in the future also. From ancient times to the present, we have activised this world. Just like rising and setting of the sun, a usual routine the immanent shiva (jiva) will never be relieved of birth and death,"

Lalleshwari did not preach any hard and fast religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony with our cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgam was made of what was good in Buddhism, Hinduism and even Islam;-

"शिव वा कीशव वा जिन वा
कमलज़ नाथ दारान युस।
म्यं' अबल का'स्त्यन बवरुज़
सुवा सुवा सुवा सू।।[18]

"That transcendental-self may assume the names of Shiva, Vishnu, Buddha or Brahma; I am concerned only with their efficacy in cutting as under my worldly afflictions, which might be accomplished by any one of these."

Therefore, it follows from this, that she was not dogmatic or rigid either. She welcomed the healthy wafts of wind coming from any direction whatsoever, anointing her body and soul with chaste Divinity. She always kept the windows of her mind open rejecting what was mundane and assimilating the sublime :-

साहे,ब छु बिहित पान दुकानस
सा'री मंगान कें छ़ा दि।
रो'ट नो कांह ति रा'छ न, वानस
यि च्ये गछी ति पानै नि।।[19]

The Super-Lord is supervising His shop with personal care. All the aspirants are eager to take away wares of their liking. Whatever, you would elect to buy, does not admit of any intermediary; It is to be earned by your own effort, since the shop is devoid of any hindrance and even a watch is not kept over it."

This is the acme of Lalla's message. Man has been exhorted to seek his own self from within, without any external aids. Self- effort is precursor of self-education, finally culminating in self- consciousness - shiva - as she calls it.

As long as the silvery billows of the Vitasta maintain their rejuvenating rhythm, as long as the virgin snow on the Himalayan heights retains its unblemished splendour and stature, the exquisite 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari soaked to the full in the inherent values of Kashmiri culture and human understanding will go on, unimpeded of course, in providing dignity to man to recognize his own self and not to run after deluding shadows; since the culture of a land never dies, the message of Lalla portraying meaningfully the humanistic attitudes ingrained in our culture, will never grow stale. Its fragrance and flavour are evergreen.

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CHAPTER 5

LALLESWARI—THE SAINT POETESS OF KASHMIR

—T.N. DHAR 'KUNDAN'

ABOUT LALDED

The Kashmiri language dates back to 8th century A.D. It is unfortunate that the literature produced by writers and poets of this beautiful land during hundreds of years has become extinct. One of the systematic extant literature is a bunch of quatrains written by a poetess known as Lalleswari, Goddess Lalla, also fondly called Lalded, mother Lalla, who was born sometime in mid fourteenth century during the reign of king Ala-ud-Din in a Brahmin family at Pandrenthan near Srinagar. She was married at a young age in a family at Pampore and suffered at the hands of her step mother-in-law. She endured all this patiently and from the beginning showed her inclination away from the mundane.

Eventually she became an ascetic and expressed her thought, experiences and her attainment through four-liners known as *'Vakh'* (from Sanskrit Vakya meaning a sentence). She came to be respected equally by Hindus and Muslims of the valley so much so that her sayings have remained on the tip of the tongue of everyone. These are invariably sung in the beginning of every Raga or 'Muqam' of the local classical music called 'Sufiana Kalam' (literally, Words of a Mystic). There is very little authentic information about her life except that she died at an advanced age at Bijbehara, another village south of Srinagar.

There are stories about the miracles performed by her, about her encounters with some other saints and about her previous births. One of the widely accepted stories about her is that she visited the household of Nunda Rishi, her junior contemporary, when he was born. His mother complained that he would not take milk from her breast. Lalded took the baby in her arm and addressed him thus, *'Yina mandachhok na chana kyazi chhukh mandachhan* - you are not shy of having come to this world, why then are you shy of sucking milk?' It is said that immediately thereafter he started sucking his mother's breast. Another story is that when some ladies at the riverside told her that she would be getting a sumptuous meal at the grand feast that was being organized in their house she replied, *'Hond maertan ya kath, Lalli neelavath tsali na zanh* - Even if a sheep, big or small is slaughtered for the feast, Lalla shall have the same stone in her plate underneath a morsel of rice.' Her father-in-law overheard this and then verified that a stone was in fact concealed under the rice in her plate so that it appeared that she ate a lot. There are other anecdotes about her poetic exchanges with Nunda Rishi and the one when her husband broke the earthen pitcher full of water that she was carrying and yet the water did not spill. In spite of the lack of information about her life and sayings, a lot can be deduced from her writings.

Lessons in tolerance

There are dozens of her 'Vakhs' wherein she advocates tolerance and forbearance, both in worldly affairs and in spiritual realm. She got ill treatment at the hands of near and dear ones as also from others who spoke ill of her both at her back and at her face. She brushed it aside by saying that it was in the human nature to speak ill of others just as it was in the nature of water to flow, in the nature of the Sun to give heat and in the nature of the Moon to wax and wane. *'Zal hav mali lusui na pakan pakan, Siriyi lusui na volgan Sumeru, Tsandrama lusui na maran zevan, Manush lusui na karan nendya* - water is not tired of flowing, the Sun is not tired of melting the snow on the mountain peak of Sumeru, nor is the Moon tired of waxing and waning. Likewise the man is not tired of speaking ill of others.' She was aware of the backbiting people indulged in about her for she says, *'Leka ta thoka sheri hetsam ninda sapnam pata bronh tam* - People spoke ill of me in my presence and behind my back and I tolerated all the abuses sportingly.'

She had an unflinching faith in her God and, therefore, she made it a point not to hate these adversaries. She has made this clear in these words: *"Yus hav mali gelyam ta maskhara karyam, su hav mali manas kharyam na zanh. Shiv panunai anugrah karyam', luku hund hedun karyam kyah* - I have no rancour for a person who speaks ill of me or makes fun of me. If Lord Shiva bestows His grace on me how shall these adverse remarks of people affect me.' In the spiritual realm also she considers tolerance as purifying water that enables the seeker to have a tete -a- tete with the Lord. In her words, *"Sahnaki salilai yodvai mal kasakh, asakh aena khota prazalvun sheena khota pron. Panay marakh, panay lasakh, lagakh on, zor, kol ta ron. Shivas sateen yali kathan rasakh, chhukh Shiv panay thav pritshun* - If you wash off all your dirt with the purifying water of tolerance, you will shine like a mirror and become spotless like snow. You will control your birth and death as also all your sense organs once you revel in conversation with Shiva. You will realize that you are yourself Shiva and there is no need to make enquiries.'

Love and harmony

It has been common with all types of sages and savants to preach love and harmony. Kabir has said this in his unique rustic way, *"Dhai aakhar prem ke pade so pandit hoi* — The learned is one who has studied the two and a half letters of the word love (The Hindi word for love is Prem, which when written comprises two and a half letters)'. The great Lalla of Kashmir was no exception. She has described the way she nurtured love for her beloved God in a number of her Vakhs, in a variety of expressions. She has compared love with ever burning fire. *"Loluk naar Lali loli lalanovum* - I cradled the fire of love in my bosom'. At yet another place she has explained that love is a pestle and mortal in which one can crush the evil thoughts. *"Lolaki vokhlai vanlij pishim, kokal tsajim ta ruzas rasa* - In the pestle and mortal of love did I grind my heart. My evil thoughts removed, I became poised and serene.'

In course of time she had become one with God and an embodiment of love. Many great sages and sufis, who followed her have prayed to God to grant them the same exalted position as she had attained. Even her own preceptor Siddha Srikanth had this to say about her, *"Gav tsath goras khasteiy, sui var ditam Diva* - The disciple has surpassed the preceptor, God grant me the same boon.' Nunda Rishi has prayed in these words: *"Tas Padmanporachi Lale, tami gale amryeth chav. Swa sanin avatar lwale, tithui mye var ditam Diva* - The Lalla of Padmanpora drank a mouthful of nectar. She is an incarnation to us. Lord! Give me a similar boon as you gave her.'

Another Sufi poet has referred to her in this verse: *"Kor Lali ikavata aakashpranas, zan milanav Bhagavaanas saet* - Lalla exercised breath control and realized the Divine,' She had gone beyond the stage of 'I' and 'my' during her life time and her individual self had merged with the Universal Supreme Self. *'Bo dapun tsolum kyah sana karay* - The notion of I has since vanished, there is nothing to do now.' *'ravana manzay ravun rovum, ravith athi aayas bhava saray. Asan gindan sahzay provum, dapunui korum panas saray* - It was only after I lost myself that I realized myself. Thereafter it was very easy to perceive the truth for I practised what I preached.'

Revolt against Falsehood

Whenever ostentation, falsehood and artificialities overshadow the real tenets of a religion and hide the truth, the essence and the reality, a leader takes birth and revolts against the falsehood. Fourteenth century was a crucial period in the history of Kashmir. It brought in Islam to this land and along with it came the forcible conversion and loss of identity. Temples were desecrated, idols were destroyed and there was ruthless persecution of the Hindus. There was large-scale migration to other parts of the country. Hindus themselves had lost their moral and spiritual strength because of their clinging to outward symbols and losing the sight of the real spirit of their faith. Ideologically they believed in Shaiva philosophy, which is based on the doctrine of pure monism and for rituals they were required to follow the Vedas. Forgetting all this, they had taken to ostentatious idol worshipping, ritualistic practices and false show of religiosity. This was not acceptable to Lal Ded. In fact she revolted against all these false practices and laid stress on the essence of Hindu Dharma. Denouncing hollow idol worship she says, *'Diva vata diver vata, heri bon chhui ikavata, pooz kath karakh hayo bhatta, kar manas pavnas sangath* - The idol is a stone and the temple is a stone structure. It is same above and below, which one shall you worship? Better create harmony between your breath and mind.'

Underscoring the omnipresence of God she says, *'Soy shail chhai patas ta peethas, soy shail chhai utam deesh, soy shall chhai phervanis gratas, Shiv chhui kruth tai tsen opdeesh* - The stone on the road and on the pedestal is the same. The same stone you will find at the sacred shrine as also in the grinding mill. It is very difficult to perceive Shiva. Better understand the underlying meaning of the preceptor's advice.' It appears that a system of sacrificing sheep at the shrines had become rampant in her days perhaps under the influence of some Tantric practices or some forms of Shaakta ideology. She has vehemently opposed this barbarous act in these words: *'Yi kamyu vopdeesh ditui Bhata, atsitan vatas dyun sotsitan kath ahaar* - Who has given this preposterous advice to you Pandit! To sacrifice a living sheep for a lifeless stone idol?' She was in favour of experiencing the truth and not merely reading about it in the scriptures. For her equality and equanimity were the cardinal principles for one to adopt. She has said this explicitly in one of her Vakhs thus: *'Buthi kyah jan chhukh vondi chhukh kani, aslech kath zanh sani no. Paran lekhan vuth ongej gaji, andrim dui zanh tsaji no* - You have put on a mask of goodness but in reality you are like a stone with no impression. You have studied a lot but your inner malice is still there.' She was also in disagreement with those who thought that the way to attain truth was through self-torture and self-denial. She could not think of torturing one's soul that was the abode of the Divine. *'Treshi bochhi mo kreshinavun, yena cheyi tana sandarun deeh, frith chains darun ta parun* - Useless is your fasting and all your studies that you are torturing yourself. Do not keep yourself thirsty or hungry. Maintain yourself by eating and drinking properly.'

A Crusader of Truth

Lal Ded cannot be counted amongst the saints-recluse. She was a crusader of truth. She went from place to place, colony to colony and town to town spreading the message of true worship, non-duality, piety and inward search. Herself also she wandered in search of the Divine, whom she eventually perceived within. About these tribulations she has this to say: *'Maag novum ta aag tsolum* - In the severest winters I took cold water baths to purify myself and in the scorching Sun I did penance.' *'Latan hund maaz laryorm vatan, aki havem akich vath. Yim yim bozan tim kona matan, Lali booz shatan kuni kath* - I travelled far and near so much that I got blisters on my feet. In the end the one and only my preceptor showed me the path to the one and only God. This being the sum and substance of all the discourses, no wonder those who will hear all this will go mad after Him.' She was vividly conscious about the impermanence of the mundane worldly things. She lamented why one should hanker after these things' of transient happiness and lose sight of the Divine a source of eternal joy. Two illustrations should suffice to bring home this message. *"Larah lazam manz maidanas, aend aend karmas takiya ta gah. So rooz yati tai bo gayas panas, vonya gav vanas phalav dith* - In the middle of the ground I constructed a house and then decorated it from all sides. I had to leave it behind when I left this world as if a shopkeeper drowned the shutters of his shop and retired.' *'Tala chhui zyus ta petha chhukh natsanas aamut, vanta mali man ketha patsan chhui? Sorui sombrith kenh chhui na motsan, vanta mali ann ketha rotsan chhui* - You live in such a way as if you are dancing on a marshy land, without realizing that it may give way any time. How does your mind accept all this? All your collections will end in naught. In such a situation, how are you able to enjoy eating with ease?'

She is, however, very sympathetic towards a common man for she knows how difficult it is to live a pious life against all odds. She says, *'sansar hav mali yaryuv jangul, lari kelam ta bihi badbo. Ghara karun hav mali pyatha pyon sangur, nerakh nangur ta darog go* - The world is a forest of pine trees. You will get stained with tar and receive bad odour. To run a household is as onorous as a mountain coming crashing down on you. You are likely to be rendered a pauper and proved a liar.' Yet she believes that the creation is the manifestation of God and, therefore it is eternal and infinite, *'asi aes tai asi aasav, asi dore kaer patavath. Shivas sori na zyun ta marun ravas sori na atagath* - We only existed in the past and we only shall be there in the future. It is Shiva who never ceases to remain in the cycle of birth and death like the Sun that never ceases to rise and set.' But according to her this would be apparent and discernible to only those who are inclined towards truth and make an effort to attain that. *'Tyoth modur tai myuth zahar, yas yuth tshunukh jatan bav. Yem yath karay kal ta kahar, su that shahar vaatith pyav* - According to one's taste and preference bitter may appear sweet and sweet may appear bitter as poison. A person attains a position and a spiritual level depending upon his aptitude and the effort he has put in.' She believed that a seeker has to distinguish between his gross body and the subtle one. She has said, *'Tim china manush tim chhiy reshi, yiman deeh mana nishi gav* - Those who view their bodies as distinct from their mind are in fact sages and not ordinary human beings.' She on her part had lost herself in the Divine and advised others to follow suit. *'Kuniray bozakh kunui no rozakh, kuniran kornam hanyakar* - If you realize non-duality you will never be alone (without God). I for one merged with Him and lost myself for ever.'

Role of the Preceptor

Lalleswari's preceptor was Siddha Srikanth, a yogi of highest spiritual attainment. She has referred to his teachings in many of her verses. A few examples are given here. *'Goran dopnam kunui vatsun,* *nebra dopnam andar atsun* - My preceptor told me but only one thing. He advised me to go from without to within.' *'Goras prutshum sasi late, yas na kenh vanan tas kyah nav. Pritshan pritshan thachis ta luses, kenhnas nishi kyah tam drav* - I enquired repeatedly from my preceptor the name of that Nameless. I was exhausted and tired of asking but eventually something was discernible out of nothing.' She has given highest importance to a preceptor in spiritual attainment, *'sahzas baej yami gorkath paeji, pap-ponya baej chhui panunui paan* - A person reaps the fruit of his good and bad actions and he who follows the advice of his preceptor attains merger with the Divine.' *"Gora shabdas yus yatsh patsh bare, gyan vagi rati tsyeta torgas. Yandryay shomrith aanand kare, ada kus mari tai maaran kas* - He who has full faith on the advice of his preceptor, controls the horse of his consciousness with the reins of knowledge, holds his senses firmly under control and remains in eternal bliss, neither dies nor is killed.'

Her Message and Philosophy

It is very clear that Lalleswari was a practitioner of Shaiva philosophy, who believed in ultimate merger of the seeker and the Divine through yoga. She did not accept ostentatious false rituals. A few of her Vakhs will illustrate her philosophy and the message she seeks to convey. She holds the sacred syllable 'Om' supreme. *'Akui Omkar yus nabhi dare, kumbai brahmandas sum gare. Akh sui manthar tsyatas kare, tas sas manthar kyah kare* - He who meditates on the single syllable Om and with yogic exercises connects the lower most aspect of his self with the uppermost aspect, remembering all the time this one sacred syllable, for him all other syllables are meaningless.' *'Dama dama Omkar man parnovum, panay paran ta panay bozan. Suham padas aham golum, tyali Lal bo vatses prakashasthan* - I attuned my mind to chant the sacred syllable Om and realized that it was He who was chanting and it was He who was listening. From the statement I am He' I was removed and thus Lalla reached the abode of light.' *'Dihichi lari dari bar troprim, prana tsur rotum ta dyutmas dam. Hradyichi kuthari andar gondum, Omki chobuka tulmas bam* - I closed all the outlets of my body and held the breath firmly. I kept it captive in my heart and whipped it with the sacred syllable Om'. For her non-dualism was the keyword for spiritual quest. She valued equanimity and a balanced treatment for everything. *"Par ta pan yem somui mono, yem hihui mone dyen keho raath. Yemsai advai man sanpun, tami dyuthui surgurunath* - One who treats himself and others alike, finds no difference between opposites like day and night and whose mind is free from duality is the only one who can see the Divine.'

Again she says, *'Azapa Gayatri hamsa hamsa zapith, aham travith sui ada rath. Yem trov aham su rud panay, bo na aasun chhui opdeesh* - From the depths of your soul you should chant the principal Gayatri Mantra. You should give up ego and cling to Him alone. One who gives up his ego perceives God. The advice is to give up the notion of I.' She advises that the Divine is to be perceived within and not to be searched outside. *Chhu kuney chhuna kuney, vuchhum or yor na kuney. Dayi phal ta mol na kuney, tsa tsento garun na kuney* - He is there and He is not there. I searched Him here and there but did not find Him anywhere. One who is after the fruit Divine, for him nothing else has any value. You have to perceive God and not to search for Him.' *'Kava chhuk divan anine batsh, trukai chhuk ta andrey atsh. Shiv chhui ati tai kun no gatsh, sahaza kathi myani kar to patsh* - Do trust my straight forward word and go inwards. Why are you groping in the dark like a blind man? Shiva is inside you and you need not look for Him elsewhere' For her the seeker and the sought-after are one and the same. *'Ora ti panay yora ti panay, panay panas chhuna melan. Pratham atses na mule danai, sui hav mall chhai ashtsar zan* - He is the seeker. He is the sought-after. Yet the two do not meet. There is not even hairline difference between the two. This knowledge is the wonder of wonders.'

Style and Diction

Lal Ded has written only in Vakh form, which was earlier used by Shitikanth in 'Mahanay Prakash'. These are generally four-liners but the meter is not the same. Sometimes there is one meter in the first and third line and a different one in the second and fourth line. The style is clearly adopted from Sanskrit Shlokas and enriched by a rhyme scheme both internal and line ending. The language used is pure Kashmiri and vocabulary heavily drawn from Sanskrit, as must have been in vogue during that time. Since the Muslim rule was already established with Persian as the official language, a sprinkling of Persian words is also seen at places. However, the diction is appropriate to the topic dealt with in these Vakhs. Words used are musical and soothing to the ears and the examples galore in these Vakhs have been taken from day-to-day life.

Some Vakhs are so musical that these can be sung to the accompaniment of a grinding mill or even in tune with the steps of a dance form, starting from low beats to fast beats. Two examples are given as follow: ' *Yot bo gayas tati os sui, tati dyuthum mol sui, kanan tshanith vol sui, sui ta sui, sui ta sui, sui hai sui, bo kusui* - Wherever I went He was there, I saw Him as the father of all. Only He and none else. If He is He, who am I?' *'Grata chhupheran zere zere, ohkui zani gratuk tshal, gratayali pheri ta zawyul nere, gu vati panay grataibal* - The hand-operated grinding mill moves round and round only if it is pushed so. The central rod round which it moves feels the brunt of this movement. This movement only produces fine flour, which eventually reaches its destination.' The underlying meaning is that one has to do ones deeds although He alone is the real doer, and these deeds only lead to the desired goal.'

How examples from daily life have been cited to illustrate deepest of thoughts, can be seen from these verses, *'atha ma ba travun kharba luka henza kongvari kheye* - Do not let loose your mind lest it goes astray, like a freed donkey eating the precious saffron plants belonging to others.' *'Hachivi harinji pyetsyuv kan gom, abhakh chhan pyomyath razdane, manzbag bazaars kulfa ros vaan gom, tirtha ros paan gom, kyah sana karay* - My wooden bow got an arrow of grass reed (how could I take the aim at the right thing?), I wanted to build a castle but employed an inexperienced carpenter (I did not act in the right way), my life became insecure like an unlocked shop in the middle of a market, my body and soul remained impure like a person without a bath, what is to be done?'

These sayings of this great saint-poetess have come down to us; largely by word of mouth. The authenticity of some of these is in doubt and many interpolations are suspected. There is, however, an authentic translation of about sixty verses in Sanskrit by Bhaskara. One hundred and seven Vakhs were translated into English prose by Grierson and Barnett and rendered into verse by Richard Temple. Pandit Anand Kaul brought out a collection of seventy-five Vakhs with English translation along with a brief life sketch of the poetess. There are other collections by S.N.Charagi and other scholars and the one brought out in a special number by the journal 'Koshur Samachar' with Hindi and English translations comprising one hundred and sixty-one verses.

Her poetry is so comprehensive, so deep and meaningful, so enchanting and melodious, so varied and rich that one can write volumes explaining and analyzing the hidden meaning and the purport of each verse.

Let me, therefore, address the same Vakh to her, which she has addressed to God as if echoing the sentiments of this devotional verse in Sanskrit: *'Ratnakaras-tava griham grehini ca Padma. Kim deyama' sti Bhavate jagadisvaraya?* - Your abode is the ocean full of jewels and pearls. Your consort is Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. You are the Lord of universe. Such being the case, what can we offer you (that you may not have)?'

Gagan tsai, bhutal tsai, Tsai chhukh dyan, pawan ta raath,
Arg, tsandun, posh, ponya tsai, Tsai chhukh sorui ta lagizi kyah.

(You are the sky, the earth, the air, the day and the night. You are the offering, the sandalwood, the flowers and the water. You are everything, what is there to offer you?)

CHAPTER 6

'SHRI RUPA BHAWANI'—AN INSPIRATION

—S. N. PANDITA

Knowledge is based on perception, inference, comparison, postulation, non-apprehension and verbal testimony. Each has its own way and sphere of operation. Consciousness is greater than the limitation of the primordial nature. It transcends the form. The identification of *Purusha* and *Prakriti* in the manifested world is the supreme Knowledge. Thus reality is a concrete unity in duality. An incarnation always exploits the *Siddhis* to create an atmosphere of Truth, Bliss and Consciousness. Sages and Saints have reflected a synthesis of being and becoining on the basis of their *Sadhan.* They are preoccupied with their inner search for experiencing the fundamental reality.

Kasamai devayai hooisha vidhema. To what God, then shall we dedicate our offering has confronted the Saints for ages to know the innate nature of the Supreme.

By offering of the pure innate nature of the inquisitive mind great souls realize the Absolute and get the integral view of Reality through three fundamental terms of existence the Transcendental Universal and Individual. The integration can be woven with intellect and emotion. The Vedas and Upanishads have often spoken of these three modes :

1. The One has become all this *(Rigveda)*
2. From the self come forth all breaths, all worlds, all devotees and all beings *(Brihad Upanishad)*

3. All the universe is the Eternal Brahman, the Self is verily Eternal *(Maitasiya Upanishad)*

The life of Rupa Bhawani is the personification and wisdom of these scriptures. As a glory of womanhood she manifests Faith and Force. Her life is a dawn bearing a new hope and awaken-ness. As a seer poetess she descended to teach the basic tenets of *Sanatam Dharma* and *Nishkam Karmayoga* and revealed the Supreme truth about the man in relation to God and Universe. She spoke her message of peace, love and higher experience of self to Kashmiris in her mother tongue.

Members of one Gotra trace their descent from a Rishi who was *Mantra-Drishta.* Bhardvaja was the Rishi of the class in which Rupa Bhawani descended as *Amasha Rupa.* He is said to be the originator of *Bhargava-Grihya-Sutra.* Thus Rupa Bhawani had really a grand and glorious spritual descent and her name has assured place among holy seers shedding rays of purity all around. She was born in 1625 A.D at Didda-mar, Khankai Sokhta Nawakadal. Rupa Bhawani's grand father's name was Pandit Kantha Dhar who had four sons namely Lal Dhar, Raja Dhar, Maheshwar Dhar and Madho Dhar. The very family history of Pandit Kantha Dhar starts from his ancestor Meru Pandit who lived during the time of Sikandar (1389-1413 A.D.). Meru Pandit was the first Kashmiri Pandit General who inflicted crushing defeat on Mohabbat Khan, a rebel military lord. Pandit Kantha Dhar was granted *jagir* by the Mughal king Jehangir for displaying this brave act. He accompanied the Mughal king and his consort to Kashmir. Her father's name was Pandit Madho Dhar and her mother's Sampat-maji. The latter came from the Kaul family of *Kawdara* mohalla of Srinagar.

Pandit Madho Dhar lived on the right bank of the Jhelum river below the sixth bridge at Srmagar close to Pandit Shyamsunder Lal Dhar's house where till recent time Pandit Bal Kaul's' decendents lived and were existed a well sacred to her memory. Pandit Bal Kaul was one of the fore-most Sanskrit scholar of his time who facilitated the legendry German scholar Georg Buhler in search of Sanskrit manuscripts during his tour to Kashimr in 1875. Pandit Madho Dhar used to have philosophical discussions with Sayyid Kamal, alias Thaga Baba, a Muslim recluse of high order who lived near his house across the river. Pandit Madho Dhar used to go to *Hari Parvat* daily for worship. One day he saw the goddess *Sharika* in a dream who asked him what he desired. Madho told the goddess he desired nothing but that she should deign to take birth in his house as a daughter. The goddess granted his prayer and in due course of time his wife gave birth to a bright little daughter. The child was named as Rupa Bhawani.

As she grew up, her divine powers manifested more and more and purity and sanctity of her life became more conspicuous. Her speech was rapture all and nameless bliss. She grew up as a paragon of virtue and wisdom. It is said that Rupa Bhawani when she was just a toddler of about three years she encountered the renowned ascetic of Kashmiri Pandit Rishi Pir. On his birthday she gave a present to him but did not like and approve of his performing miracles, which made him famous and popular. Rupa Bhawani instead shunned show and publicity and remained in secrecy seeking communion with God. After her meeting with Rishi Pir the young Bhaward uttered *Rishis piyeyeh tembra pyanaitu ohnajan gayis* meaning that spark of revelation had fallen on Rishi Pir but it went the wrong way without igniting his spiritual for seeking God. Hearing this Rishi Pir is reported to have bowed down before her.

While yet but seven years old, she was married to a young man named Pandit Shyam Sundar, son of Chatur Pandit of the Sapru family living at Saparityar (2nd Bridge) at Srinagar. Rupa Bhawani's mother-in-law was, like that of Lall Ded's the prophetess, noted for relentless cruelty and was a stumbling block to her happiness. Rupa Bhawani used to go, in the first grey of the morning to *Hari Parvat* for worship, and even for this, absurd and scandalous whispers, born of sheer malice and hatred, were circulated by her cranky mother-in-law. Once her husband was, at his mother's instructions, sent after her as a spy to see where she was actually going so early in the morning. He followed her and watched her from a distance. When she was returning, near the place called *Parankanih,* to the south of the *Hari Parvat* hill she looked behind and saw her husband following her like a spy. She was naturally offended at this, and a prayer fell from her lips that the Sapru family might never thrive. And this family has actually not thriven since, there being very few people belonging to it in the whole valley of Kashmir.

Once on the *Khitsimavas* day Rupa Bhawani's parents sent a pot full of *pulav* (cooked rice with spices) to her husband's house. Her mother-in-law, far from being pleased, began to grumble that the *pulav* was insufficient to feed all the family members and relations' Rupa Bhawani, however, covered the pot with a doth and meekly requested her to begin distributing its contents. She began giving platefuls out of it, but lo! it would not empty. When all were served, Rupa Bhawani lifted the cloth and it was then empty. Yet her mother-in-law's anger was not appeased. She told Rupa Bhawani peevishly to remove the empty pot from her sight. She took it to the *ghat* and let it float down the river. It reached the *ghat* of her parents while her father happened to be bathing there. He recognized the pot as his own and, catching it, took it home.

Rupa Bhawani led her hermitical life at Wastarwan for 12½ years, then at Chashma-i-Sahibi for another period of 12½ years and then in a forest in the Lar *pargana* for another 12 years. The *lambardar* of the village of Manigam, named Lal Chand, was informed by some boys that 'they had seen an ascetic at a cranny in the neighbouring forest. He went with them and saw her, and at his request she came and lived in his house for six months. She then left this house stayed on the bank of the Sindh River at the same village for another period of 12½ years. Here she planted a Chinar tree, which is still there. At all the above places she performed austere penances. While at Manigam, she used occasionally to float down the Sindh river on a piece of matting to Qasba Lar village, where Shah Sadiq Qalandar, (a great Muhammadan philormath) used to reside, and there she used to converse on religious topics with him. Once he said to her : "Rupa Dedi! If you come to our side (i.e., become a convert to Islam) you will become gold in place of *Rup* (silver)," To this she replied : "Shah Sadiq ! If you come to our side (become a Hindu at heart) you will become *Mokta* (pearl, or having attained salvation) in place of (she) Shah (glass)." At another time, when Shah Sadiq Qalandar saw her, she was dressed in a garment dyed crimson. He asked her what colour her garment was. She replied, *"Zog, surath, tah mazeth"*. These words have a two-fold meaning, the one literal and the other mystical namely, (1) 'vitriol, safflower and madder. (2) 'be awake, catch Him (God) and do not extend' (in this world).

Rupa Bhawani moved from Manigam to Ripur just above the hermitage of Shah Sadiq Qalandar, where she performed austere penances for another period of 12½ years. After that she left one of her female servants, named Jaman Ded whose own house was at Qasba Lar, in charge of this place and went to Vasakur village, near Sumbal. Kasturmaji was another female servant of hers, who belonged to the same family as Aita Shah Malang, one of the esoteric disciples of Rishi Pir. She was a widow and had only a young son, named Rama Chandra Matu, with her. Rupa Bhawani took her together with her son to Vasakur. At this place she remained for 25 years. Here she had a well sunk by a blind potter, whose eyesight became miraculously restored as soon as water level was reached in the well. This potter's descendants still live at Vasakur.

Rupa Bhawani had a brother named Lall Dhar, whose son Bala Dhar, lived with Rupa Bhawani at Vasakur. This youth remained illiterate till he was 22 years of age. One day his father rebuked him for his illiteracy. Stung with remorse he wept bitterly. Rupa Bhawani, however, consoled him and gave him a pen made from a pomegranate twig, ink made with charcoal and some paper, and bade him write an application for employment to Auranzeb, the then emperor at Delhi. He obeyed and, wonderful to relate, wrote it admirably and in the best Persian diction. The Emperor, who was pleased with its style and hand-writing, appointed him to a post at Delhi, which he took up, and held with great credit. After some time he sent a letter composed in verse to his aunt, Rupa Bhawani. She also sent him a reply in verse. Both these documents are believed to have survived and adore an unidentified archive in the country.

Rupa Bhawani's paternal female cousins often indulged in gibes, sneers and whispers against her for her ill luck so far as conjugal happiness was concerned. Naturally the reproaches struck home, and she would heave a deep sigh and knit her brow in distress, her soul labouring under a sickly sensibility of the miseries not of herself alone for the time being, but also of others like herself in the family in the future, which she could foresee. On the other hand, her paternal male cousin's wives showed sincere sympathy with her and admired her magnanimity in patiently and nobly bearing misfortunes hatched by her cranky mother-in-law, and them she used to bless. And it does so happen that daughters-in-law in the Dhar family are, together with their husbands, invariably prosperous and happy.

Rupa Bhawani introduced a very important social reform, which is still in vogue, and has rendered her name immortal. She tabooed bigamy and polygamy, both in respect of daughters and daughters-in-law. This reform has greater force and higher sanction than a statutory law, solemnized as it is by an oath administered by her against its infringement, and it is, therefore, respected by all and strictly adhered to.

Rupa Bhawani's mind was always fixed on things heavenly. Her verses, composed in mixed Sanskrit and Kashmiri, which number 96, have a profound mystic significance. They have been recorded, and they are repeated by several of her votaries every morning. Five of them, show that her spiritual *guru* in her practice of *yoga* was her father, Pandit Madho Dhar.

Rupa Bhawani, at the advanced age of 96 years, came to Srinagar after leaving Kasturnaji in charge of her place at Vasakur, and shuffled off her mortal coil without regret, but mourned by all, in her parents' house on the 7th of the dark fortnight of Magh, v.s. 1777 (= A.H. 1133 + A.D. 1721). The words — in the following epigram in Persian, composed by Shah Sadiq Qalandar, give the chronogram, viz. A.H. 1133, of her death :-

That holy natured incarnation of the Unseen (Goddess)
Broke her coil of four elements (i.e., quitted her body)
Flew to the highest heaven
With a good natured heart united with Bliss.

Her *Vaakhs* are by and large the spiritual out pouring of a God centred sou. Like Lal Ded Roopa Bhawani did not compromise her *Vaakhs* as a deliberate attempt or contribution to literature or philosophy. She did not sing them nor write for kirtan or devotional recitation and singing as later day Bhakti saint singers did. Roop Bhawani did not deliberately did the role of either an enangelist or preacher. Her verses were by and large the candid expression of her mystic experiences. They have come to us in the form of *Shruti*- the revealed word. It was much later that they were written down in *Sharada* script in a manuscript form. Under the title of *Rahasaypdesha.* This text was subsequently revised in Devanagari script by Shiv Nath Sharma from the original manuscript made by Pandit Hara Bhat Shastri. The first edition was published in 1941 A.D. The core of Rupa Bhawani spiritual philosophy pivots round non-dualism of Shankari's *Advaita* and *Param Shivam* of Abhinav Gupta's *Saivism.* They abound in abstruse devotion to omnipresent and omnipotent.

While walking over the bridge of consciousness Shri Rupa Bhawani experienced the strong vibrations of all the elements of mental, astral ethereal and dense physical matter. And while going deep in *Shakti* aspect of Kashmir, her inner experience became a Divine creation for the world. Her every word is a secret of being and becoming and reveals as the source of light and sound. Her verses reveal that Divine mother is the Supreme Consciousness. She reveals Herself the Supreme Truth to awaken the man's *Samvit* as *Jivatman* the embodied soul is caught in the whirlpool of *Samsara*—the cyclic movement of the universe and the ordinary life of *Moha*—delusion and *Avaidya* — ignorance. They bear the essence that meditation upon the Self is the basis of *Sadhana* to realise the *mother creatrix.* Its culmination is the immediate experience. Scriptural study, reasoning and all other disciplines are subsidiary means. She teaches that knowledge of innermost self is the ultimate aim of human life and the Absolute and Omnipresent can appear in three aspects of *Ichhashakti, Jnanashakti* and *Kriyashakti.* The vaakhs show that all these three shaktis get vibrant and act as spirit's power of will, knowledge and action. She explains that cosmic process continues endlessly in cyclic order of creation, preservation and dissolution. This is the cosmic play of *Anand Rupam Param Brahma Soham*. Her teaching is that a liberated soul demonstrates through his life and action the Absolute Reality.

Rupa Bhawani traced her spiritual origin in the Primal person and to her Primal *shakti* was eternal, pure and innate self. That am I' is the integral Yoga. She transcended the *Tunya* state of consciousness Literally her emphasis is on *Nir Vikalpa Samadhi*—the identity of Shiva with Shakti in the accent of self. Her blessings are filled with deep love and compassion. Her message relates that darkness of ignorance will vanish and the sun of knowledge will lead to innate reflection of the Immutable and the essence of Divine Knowledge. Her *Vaakhs* tell that knowledge dispels all illusions and *Sadhaka* can become free from fear, sin, grief, taint and death. She taught the *Upanishadic* truth to humanity not in *Sutms* - aphorism but in lucid, analytical poetry explaining the Vedic *Bija Mantras* of *Aum* and *Soham* She stresses upon the *Sadhaka* to make every effort for attaining *Nirvana* . She considers Yoga and devotion indispensable to it. The awakening of *Kundalini Shakti* is her main concern.

In her verses Rupa Bhawani emphasises that Supreme alone must be worshipped and adored. If the embodied soul looks into his own-self through introspection then alone he can experience the knowledge of the Self. After dissolving the dualistic approach the seeker can merge with the Supreme Self. In the *Vakya-Manjari,* Rupa Bhawani has churned both the *Shruti* and *Smntt* for getting *Amritamriti* of *Eternity,* All the four Vedas have been covered by her in 96 verses. Some claim them to be 146. These verses are mystic revelations based on *Pratyaksha*—the perception, *Anumana*—the inference, *Shabda* or *Agama*—the verbal testimony, *Upamana*—the comparison and *Arthaprapati*—the postulation. The implication is that each *Pramana*—the philosophic credence of spirit has a characteristic way of understanding the relation between *jivatman*—embodied soul and

Paramatma—the Supreme Self. She stresses on self-knowledge and prescribes the methods of knowledge on the basis of *Advaita-Vedanta Shakta* and *Shawa Agamas*. She describes the source of valid knowledge as *Shabda-Brahmana* a force ever filled with Divine Self known as *Pam-Shakti.*

In the *Svanubhava-Ullasa-Dashkam,* She identifies the vital breath with *Shabda,* She speaks of *Ida, Pingla, Sushuma* and *Bhramnadi.* She discloses the various facets of *Ananhat Anamaya* and *Turia* state of consciousness. She teaches that *Shabda* remains an independent means of valid knowledge as perception is knowing the Supreme Self in the essential unity of Anu—the micro and *Virat*—the macro for realising one's identity with the cosmos. Bhawani transcends the Rupa—the physical form.

A beautiful Persian verse of Shah Sadiq Qalandar suggests the transitoriness of the world as best depicted by Rupa Bhawani's philosophy.

At one time we are in pursuit of adornment and ornaments -
during the season of youth.

At another time we are in pursuit of knowledge and office -
we made calculations.

When we became aware of this wretched world- it is a
picture drawn on the surface of water.

We washed our hands of everything, we became monks - lo
to find god.

At one time we made excursions over a plain, riding,

At another time we walked round a plateau

We found this lane of life had no end.

We strolled on and strolled back.

CHAPTER 7

THE LIFE OF DEVI ROOP BHAVANI

—APARNA DAR

In the early seventeenth century, a Kashmiri Pundit named Madhav Ju Dar lived in Srinagar. Madhav Ju was of a deeply religious and philosophical temperament, and his daily life was conducted in an impeccably religious spirit. He worshipped the Supreme Being (Ishwara) in the form of the Divine Mother Sharika (Durga).

In Srinagar, there is a hill known as Hari Parvat or Sharika Parvat where the Goddess Sharika is worshipped since ancient times. Legend relates that, long ago, some demons troubled the local people, who prayed to the Goddess Durga for protection. She took the form of a Sharika (Maina) bird and dropped a large chunk of earth on the entrance to the cave of the demons to seal them inside the hill. She then took her abode on the hill to ensure that they did not escape. This gave the name Sharika Parvat to the hill. The Goddess is represented there by the *Sri Chakra* (a regular geometrical mystical pattern) in sandy rock, which is anointed with red lead *(sindur)*. The deity is also called Chakreshwari. Regular worship has been offered at this shrine for centuries.

To this shrine of the Divine mother Sharika, Madhav Ju came every day to worship in the auspicious hour of *Brahma Muhurta* (pre-dawn). He would chant Her Holy Name, with his face glowing with devotion and his entire being absorbed in Her worship. For hours he would be so transported, the fire of devotion lighting up his entire being with divine radiance. Thus did this devotee of the Divine Mother pass his days.

It is said that on the first day of the *Navaratri* (the nine days dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother Durga) in the month of *Ashwin,* in the year 1620, Madhav Ju arrived for worship at midnight, to uninterruptedly worship on this most auspicious of occasions.

He commenced his worship and, with all reverence and attentive detail, he glorified the Supreme Goddess, his heart filled with adoration. When his worship was complete, the Divine Mother is said to have appeared before him in the form of a radiant girl child.

On seeing this divine child, Madhav was so filled with intense joy and bliss that he lost all consciousness of his external surroundings, and tears of joy and devotion flowed from his eyes. He understood that the Mother of the Universe, Mahamaya, was Herself in front of him in the form of this child.

Thereupon he worshipped the girl, placing flowers at Her feet and incense before Her. With fatherly love he offered Her sweets. The Mother was pleased with the simplicity, sincerity, and love, of Her devotee, and granted him a boon. Madhav requested Mother, 'Since you have appeared before me in the form of a child, take birth in my house as my daughter.' The Divine Mother granted the boon and vanished. So goes the legend of the birth of Roop Bhavani.

In the following year 1621, in the month of *Jyeshtha,* on the *Poornima Tithi* (full moon), in the early morning a daughter was born to Madhav Ju's wife. Madhav Ju named his daughter Alakshyeshvari, which means one who is imperceptible and indescribable; it refers to the Goddess in the formless non-dual aspect.

In her father's house, Alakshyeshvari's years of childhood were passed in the company of devotees. Madhav Ju was held in high esteem, and spiritual seekers came from far away provinces to meet him. Alakshyeshvari's spirituality blossomed early in these favourable conditions. As she grew older, the spiritual tendencies within her became increasingly manifest. Her father, Madhav, himself became her guru and gave her spiritual initiation. Nevertheless, in accordance with the prevailing customs of the time, her father arranged her marriage to a young man of the nearby Sapru family.

However, Alakshyeshvari's married life was unhappy. Her husband, Hiranand Sapru, totally lacked all understanding of Alakshyeshvari's spiritual nature; and her mother-in-law, Sop Kunj, had a cruel disposition. Alakshyeshvari's life in this house was difficult and joyless. Her mother-in-law always finding fault with her. Once she accused Alakshyeshvari of going out at midnight, and made Hiranand suspicious of his wife's fidelity.

The truth was that at midnight Alakshyeshvari would go to perform her *sadhana* (spiritual practice) at the shrine of Mother Sharika on Hari Parvat. One day Hiranand followed her to see where she went at night. Alakshyeshvari knew this. When she had nearly reached the shrine she turned around and asked Hiranand to join her. However as he was steeped in ignorance, he is said to have beheld a vast expanse of water, impossible to cross, between himself and her and, disheartened, he was forced to return home.

Yet another incident is related of her life in her in-laws home. One day, on the occasion of some festival, Madhav sent his daughter a pot of rice pudding *(kheer)*. Alakshyeshvari's mother-in-law on seeing *the kheer* spoke sarcastically, 'What will I do with this small pot of *Kheer?* I have so many relatives; this is hardly sufficient for them', Alakshyeshvari replied, 'Please give this *kheer* to as many persons as you like, but don't look inside the pot.' Sop Kunj began to ladle out the *kheer* and gave it to everyone she knew. But the supply of *kheer* seemed endless! Finally, furious with anger. Sop Kunj looked inside the pot to find just a few grains sticking to its sides.

The next day at dawn, Alakshyeshvari cleaned the pot, and placed it in the flowing current of the Vitasta river, speaking thus, 'My father is doing his morning prayers *(Sandhya)* at the Diddmar Ghat. Go and stop there.' The pot floated down the Vitasta river and stopped exactly where Madhav Ju was doing his *Sandhya.* Madhav picked up the pot and took it home.

Even after seeing such miraculous incidents, not just once, but many times. Sop Kunj stubbornly refused to change her ways towards Alakshyeshvari. Hiranand also remained foolish and ignorant. Finally, when living there became unbearable, Alakshyeshvari left her husband's house never to return. It is said that this Sapru family's fortunes rapidly declined thereafter.

Alakshyeshvari renounced her father's home as well, and decided to seek the eternal abode of the Supreme Being. She wanted to become absorbed in *sadhana.* Seeking a solitary retreat, she selected a location to the north-east of Srinagar, known by its ancient name Jyestha Rudra. Here she did intense *tapasya* (austerities) for twelve and a half years, and began to glow with the fire of spirituality. At this point, people, attracted by her spiritual radiance, began to come to her in such large numbers that she decided to leave the place for a more solitary retreat.

She moved to a village Mani Gaon, in north Kashmir, on the banks of the Ganges in the foothills of the Himalayas. On festival days many people would gather at Mani Gaon for a dip in the sacred waters. In these beautiful surroundings Alakshyeshvari chose to do her *sadhana.* On a forested hilltop, far from the village, she made a hermitage for herself. For a long time she remained in solitude, deep in spiritual practices.

It is said that none of the villagers at Mani Gaon knew of Alakshyeshvari's existence, until a certain miraculous incident revealed her presence to them. A cowherd boy used to take his cows to graze at a place which, unknown to him, was close to where Alakshyeshvari was absorbed in meditation. The boy noticed that a beautiful white cow left the herd every day at noon, and later returned on her own accord. One day he decided to follow the cow to see where she went.

Following the cow, he reached a clearing in the forest. There he saw a beautiful woman dressed in ochre robes seated in meditation, her long hair flowing loosely, her face ashine with a heavenly lustre, and her eyes filled with a divine light. The cow, as though under a spell, stopped before the radiant ascetic. The ascetic woman got up and lovingly caressed the cow. The cow of her own accord poured its milk into the ascetic's bowl until it was full!

On seeing this wonderful vision the cowherd boy lost consciousness. When he returned to his senses, he traced his way back to his herd. In the evening, when he milked the white cow he found to his astonishment that she gave even more milk than usual.

The cowherd confided his experiences to Lal Chandra, the village head. Lal was filled with reverence and devotion. He visited Alakshyeshvari, and then came daily to serve her in whichever way he could. By this time she had completed another twelve and a half years of spiritual practice in that hermitage.

We will from here refer to her as Bhavani (the Goddess as the power originating the world) or as Bhagavati (the Goddess with the six attributes of supremacy, righteousness, fame, prosperity, wisdom, and discrimination). This is in keeping with the common belief in Kashmir that Alakshyeshvari was an incarnation of the Goddess Durga.

Lal Chandra told the villagers of Bhavani and the miraculous happenings attributed to her. But when she began to receive a great deal of public attention, she left the village, preferring to continue her spiritual practices in solitude. She went to dwell in a hut on the bank of the Shahkol river. Even there she attracted devotees.

Once, a spiritual seeker fascinated by her aura of spirituality asked her, 'What is your name?' Bhavani replied, 'My name is Roopa (one who has realized her own True Self).' The seeker further questioned her, 'Why do you wear this ochre dress?' Bhagavati replied, 'This ochre represents the state of being in which the individual soul has taken the colour of the Supreme Being.'

Bhavani lived for many years on the banks of the Shahkol, absorbed in meditation. Finally, when large numbers of devotees again began to flock around her, she once more moved away to a quieter spot, in the village of Vaskora. Legend says that the Naga, (snake) Vasuki, did his *tapasya* in Vaskora to attain the Grace of Shiva. When his *sadhana* bore fruit, he asked Lord Shiva for a boon, 'May I always adorn you as a necklace.' Bhagavati greatly liked this spot and began to dwell there.

Bhavani's grace now began to shower on her numerous devotees. Many miracles are attributed to her. There was a young boy, blind from birth, who served her with great devotion. Bhavani's compassionate heart was moved by his sad condition. She gave him a stick and asked him to dig the earth with it. He immediately obeyed her. Many devotees gathered nearby, watching. Soon water began to appear from the hole that was dug. Bhavani said to the young boy, 'Wash your eyes with the water that has come forth.' As the boy did so, his sight was restored, and the crowd of devotees were amazed.

Bhavani had a brother, Lal Ju, who was very devoted to her and took her as his guru. Lal's son, Bal, began to stay with her in her service. Once, Lal requested Bhavani to educate his illiterate son. Bhavani gave the boy a pen and some paper and ordered him to write. Thereupon, miraculously, the boy began to write fluently like a highly educated person. The devotees were overwhelmed by this transformation.

In Vaskora, Bhavani began to give spiritual instruction to Bal Ju Dar and Sadanand Muttoo in the form of poetical verses, called Vakhs. One hundred and forty-five of her Vakhs have been transmitted to us. After twelve and a half years (periods of this length seem to recur in Bhavani's life) had elapsed in Vaskora, Bhavani returned to

Srinagar on the entreaties of her numerous devotees, and began to live in Saphakadal.

Many years had elapsed, and Bhavani now yearned to be released from her earthly body. On the *Saptami Tithi,* in the month of *Magha,* in the year 1721, Bhavani's soul took flight forever. The legend relates how her devotees, filled with grief, carried her body towards the cremation ground. On the way they met the village head who, on seeing the funeral procession, asked whom they were carrying. On hearing that it was Roop Bhavani he was very startled, for he had just seen Bhavani walking down the road by which he came! The devotees looked inside the coffin and found nothing there but some *alak* (locks of hair) and some flowers. The *alak are* even today worshipped with great reverence.

Although she is not with us now, Roop Bhavani's *Vakhs* are so vibrant with her presence that *on* reading them one feels that she is very near, giving knowledge to her children with powerful words of renunciation, and dispelling ignorance with the weapon of Eternal Truth. May she guide us on the true path of knowledge, towards the Divine Light.

CHAPTER 8

A GREAT HERMIT OF KASHMIR—PANDIT RESHI PIR

—S.N. PANDITA

Saints are founts of inspiration and as apostles with superhuman energy, appear in this world from time to time. From the earliest time Kashmir has been land of saints and seers of sublime order who developed in themselves occult powers which beggar description. Despite the lapse of centuries they lived, they still command homage and devotion. These sages and hermits have been gnomic poets whose oracular outpourings are indescribable with themes pregnant with divine love as well as worldly wisdom to awaken lofty thoughts. They remind the apostate of the Creator and his grace. To their serene meditative minds speculation in the domains of spiritual and metaphysical aspects of lights was always congenial. Their deeds 'strike the chord of devotional feelings and nobler sentiments among those who trace the Gods to man's ancestors and to whom every echo of ancestral day is both inspiring and soul elevating. The lives of saints lead us to wider hearted appreciation of higher values which contribute to the spiritual ideas of the eager-hearted devotees and believers.

Their lives are a thrilling song and even the present age of technology and information does not require to harp on or hearkeen to a nobler theme than that of their universal appeal to bail mankind of its conflicting predicament of modernity. A saintly soul's account of life will certainly be appreciated by many in whom tradition is not dead, by many to whom ancient learning and the veneration of ancestors are the breath of life and by many in whom the marvel of their esoteric message tempers materialism with a fine graft of philanthropy upon philosophy. Some of the accounts of seers are magnified portraits of the real men but there is no denying the fact that their pure souls were really manifestations of the power of God and that the bygone generations through whom their traditions have descended were not unmindful of preserving the historical accuracy of their lives. To sum up in the words of Ruskin, these holy sages, "are fateful executors of a command unknown".

In Kashmir they have indeed shaped and moulded the character of people and their society and Kashmiris repeat their aphoristic lines again and again in their every day life as current coins of quotations. But the pity is that these philosophers did not reduce their renderings to writing. What they had to say, they taught orally to their disciples and their sayings and account of life were written after their dates in a very crude manner. Thus defectively recorded, the count of these sages and seers in general have become inextricably confused and full of interpolations by disciples, imitators and rhapsodists. Whatever was noted by any one person in the margin of his treasured private copy by way of record and interpretations was regarded by the next owner or copyist as part of the text. And sometime it was impossible to alter a word in such records without altering it for the worse. And as no exception to the mill of time is also the account of life of one of the most venerated saints of Kashmir—Pandit Reshi Pir. However being aware and responsible to record an authentic sketch of the saint, every possible available reference and information accessed by me both in the printed form and from oral traditions have been analysed and utilized to set forth below the following brief result on his life.

Reshi Pir was one of the most famous saints of Kashmir. Records of history give his birth to the 6th of the dark fortnight of Baisakh, V.S. 1694 which correspond to 1637 A.D. The chronogram of his birth given in a popular verse so well etched on memory of Kashmiris in itself is suggestive of the prodigile attainments attributed to Reshi Pir. A beautiful translation of these Persian lines read thus, "for the year of the date of his coming, the heart and mind consulted each other. Say the date of this auspicious speech may the country of Kashmir be happy through him".

Purified as he was from all earthly dross Reshi Pir has been befittingly called a *Peer* among the *Pirs*. His father whose name some historians have identified as Pandit Govind Khusu but mostly as

Govind Kaul lived in the Bhattyar Mohalla of Srinagar. Reshi Pir's mother came from the village of Gushi, a place which has earned its fame as being native of Pandit Dharma Das Darvesh, the preceptor of oral renderings of Lal Ded's *vaakhs* as they came down to us from generations in a memorised form before they were put to pen by Mahamahopadhyaya Mukandram Shastri in a manuscript form of most authentic nature in the year 1914.

Birth of Reshi Pir too is not shrouded in any mystry. He was born near an old bridge at Sopor while his mother was once on her way from her father's house to her home in Srinagar. However a legend is well preserved in the Kashmiri tradition about the marriage of Reshi Pir's father and mother. Reshi Pir's father was well to do man but could not get a girl to marry. What worried him was his advancing age. He, however ultimately succeded in marrying a girl in Gushi village of Tehsil Handwara. When the bride groom arrived from the marriage ceremony at the village his mother-in-law after noticing some grey hair on his head fainted due to shock. After the wedding was over she reportedly prayed at a near by sacred spring for her daughter's welfare.

One day while praying earnestly at the spring, she heard a voice telling her, "oh poor woman go to your house and get your daughter to the spring. Some flowers will appear in the spring. Let your daughter smell these flowers and your wish would be fulfilled and your daughter will get a holy son". This was done by the lady and expectedly her daughter later bore a son whom she named Reshi. When five years old Reshi Pir's investiture with the sacred thread was performed. His marriage took place when he was seven years old. Soon after he lost his father.

Reshi Pir had a religious turn of mind from his very childhood. By the time he attained the age of 12 years he became indifferent to worldly affairs and devoted his entire time to quench his insatiable thirst for knowing God through *Sadhana* with this initiation he would go to Hari Parbat daily. Legend has it that on one occasion he made it to the temple of Sharika Devi consecutively for 40 days crawling all the way on his knees a distance of 3 miles from his home. One day he was tired and fell asleep. He had a dream in which he saw the Goddess who enquired from him as to what he wanted. Prostrating before the Devi, he implored Her for being granted the boon of a spiritual guide. The Devi ordained that the first man he would come across henceforth would be his *Guru.* When Reshi Pir woke up from his dream he regretted he had not asked the Goddess herself to be his spiritual guide. However after he left the *Deviangan* and near the shrine of *Lakshmi* on the northern side of the hillock he encountered a *Mastana* saint sitting on a big stone and bowed to him. He was Krishna Kar a famous hermit living at Rainawari. But the saint bolted away himself without saying a word to Reshi and left the place leaving Reshi far behind. The *Mastana,* Krishna Kar reached Reshi's home before he himself reached there.

Some account suggest that at Reshi's home Krishna Kar ask his mother to offer him *Jejeer* (Hukkah) and smoking a puff or two instructed her to advice Reshi to take a puff himself after he reached home. Whether it was due to the puff that kindled a divine spark in Reshi to open his *Jnana netra* for becoming God intoxicated *Trikaladarshi* or it was the keen eye of Krishna Kar that had appraised Reshi the revelations of glimpses of divine knowledge unfolded before Reshi none or verifiable in any written record. What followed was, Krishna Kar kept Reshi with his chief disciple Zinda Pir who within a short period infused new warmth into him and kindled the flame of divine vision in the house of Reshi's body. After this initiation Reshi continued his intense *Sadhana* for 14 years. As a daily practice, he used to go round the Hari Parbat and use to walk outside its bastioned wall and on reaching Sangin Darwaza where there in the full view of the *Chakreshwar* he used to run as if effulgence of the Goddess was unbearable to him. He was invariably accompanied by a large band of disciples among whom two men named Nanak Shah Azari and Aita Shah Malang were his favourites. He started working miracles. But this was viewed with disfavour by saints walking in higher spheres in whose eyes every action tending to show personal and worldly aggrandizement sullied the true love of God. Rupa Bhawani a famous hermitses who lived in his time therefore had remarked *'Rishis piyeyh tembra parantu tsajin nah'* meaning that a spark had fallen on *reshi* but he could not bear it.

By working miracles Reshi Pir's fame for sanctity spread far and wide and people out of respect towards him began to call him *'Padshah'* (the king). He used to be carried by his disciples on a throne. He got a seal made on it engraved *Padshah-i-Jahan.* The engraver however secretly sent a report of this to the then emperor of India Aurangzeb. His Majesty became incensed and deputed an orderly to Kashmir to seize and conduct Reshi Pir to his presence at Delhi. When the orderly reached Srinagar and went to arrest Reshi Pir there was a great commotion among the people. Reshi Pir was inform of this by his disciples. He said he must obey the imperial order. He asked his disciples to provide the Royal orderly with food and shelter for the night and further told them that he must be left alone in his room that night and the door should be chained from outside. They did as they were instructed.

Reshi Pir by the force of his occult powers appeared before Aurangzeb at Delhi riding on a lion and asked him why he was being troubled. Terrified at Reshi Pir's feat, Aurangzeb wrote out another order countermanding the previous one with blood pricked from his little finger with a knife and gave it to Reshi Pir. In the same order he commanded that Reshi Pir should hereafter be called not only be the title of *Padshah* but by that of *Padshah-i-hardu-jahan.* Next morning when Reshi Pir's disciples opened the door of his room he gave them the emperor's order with the instructions to hand it to his orderly. The orderly on receiving it returned to Delhi. The Emperor, on rising from his bed next morning felt greatly frightened and quickly wrote to the then Governor of Kashmir Saif Khan who held the post of Governor from 1665 to 1668 and again from 1669 to 1672 A.D. directing him to go to Reshi Pir and present him with a *jagir* on his behalf and ordering further that the *Reshi* should thenceforth be addressed not only by the title *Padshah* but by that of *Padshah-i-hardu-jahan.* The Governor went and presented Reshi Pir with a *sanad* for a *jagir* and ten villages in the *Devsar pargana.*

However there is a different tradition current in Muslims of Kashmir about this fact of history. It goes that, after Aurangzeb had sent his messenger to arrest Reshi Pir, some of his advisors assured the emperor that it was a false report of the seal engraver that Reshi Pir desired to assume the sovereignty of Kashmir. They apprised him that Reshi Pir was a saintly person to whom worldly power was repugnant. Aurangzeb there upon issued the revised order annulling his first one. In any case thereafter Reshi Pir was called by the title *Padshah-i-hardu-jahan* as ordered by Aurangzeb.

Once Reshi Pir was invited to a feast by Shah Muhammad, who was also known by the name of Akhund Mulla Shah of Badakhshan. He was the tutor of Dara Shikoh, eldest brother of Aurangzeb who used to reside in the Dara Mohalla built by Dara Shikoh. Records of history attest that Shah Muhammad died at Lahore in 1661 A.D. and was buried close to the tomb of his *Master*, Mian Mir. He had been summoned there by Aurangzeb at the instance of Dara Shikoh's enemies. A monastery of polished stone of great architectural beauty built by Jahan-Ara-Begam in 1650 A.D. was reportedly extant until recent time as an attachment of Dara Mohalla in Srinagar. The above building was situated on the southern slope of Hari Parbat hill commanding a picturesque landscape.

Reshi Pir knew by inspiration that intention of the Mulla was to destroy his caste. He however accepted the invitation on the condition that the food cooked should be served entire on the covered plate and nothing may be eaten by any body else, before he himself removed the covers from the plates. Shah Muhammad agreed to this. He got the rice and fowls cooked by Muslim cooks. Attired humbly and garbed meagerly, to quote Kipling's words, "he scarce had need to doff his pride or slough the dross of earth", Reshi Pir arrived at Mulla Shah's residence at the fixed hour. The doorkeeper not knowing him refused him the entry thinking that how could a man in such attire be the guest of the evening for whom all the preparations were on. He expected that such a man would be a personage of great pomp attired in shawls and lace and certainly would be accompanied by an escort.

Reshi Pir returned home and after casting off his humble habiliments, dressed himself in raiment gaudy and gay again went to the feast taking a large number of disciples with him. Arriving at Shah Muhammad's residence the doorkeeper threw the door open with a salute and escorted him through the unbarred gate inviting Reshi Pir to pass through the reception hall. With all honours Shah Muhammad received Reshi Pir. Following this Reshi Pir took the designated seat in the brilliantly lit and richly decorated hall. The host known for his verse composition of sacred and holy poetry expressed his intense pleasure by welcoming the guest by reciting a Persian couplet which were rendered in English went like this,

"An Emperor has become our guest. Gods messenger and the angels have become the doorkeepers". To this welcome Reshi Pir's chief disciple Aita Shah Malang replied,

"To what avail is the plurality in the glorious hall of oneness where eighteen thousand worlds have become all the same to us".

Putting an end to the oratory debate of such egotism, Reshi Pir intervened by stating,

"In the religion of mendicants there is no room for the apostle or the prophet. The wealth of Indigent (God) is our wealth".

After this the plates duly covered were placed before Reshi Pir and taking no time he stretched out his long sleeves and bade them to eat. The guests present sat mute but in wonder at the strange behaviour of Reshi Pir. On enquiry by the host what he meant by it, Reshi Pir related the whole story of how he was treated by the doorkeeper when he had come in ordinary dress and how he was received when he came again attired in elegant wear. Reshi Pir exclaimed ironically that *man counted nothing but clothing mattered everything.*

Sensing shame Shah Muhammad pleaded pardon for the doorkeeper's conduct. Reshi Pir now asked for the removal of lids from the plates with servings of the feast. No sooner this was done fowls came out flying from the bowls and more strangely one fowl was without a leg. On enquiry it was learnt that the cook had eaten it to test the adequacy of salt added to the dish. Reshi Pir asked Shah Muhammad to give his own leg to the fowl to replace the one, cook had eaten. It was however one of the disciples of Reshi Pir who came to Shah's rescue pointing out that a human leg on a fowl would look monstrous. Shah Muhammad felt a shame at all this and pleaded again for pardon from Reshi Pir while his cronies who thought that he was going to lose his caste were equally ashamed while marvelling at his supernatural powers.

Following this Reshi Pir went home. In the hope to rid himself of the curse Shah Muhammad also went to see to ascetics named Saiyid Kamal alias Thaga Baba and Amir Muradaz both of whom lived near the Watal Kadal Bridge and told them about the incident of feast, both the ascetics advised him not to entangle himself by playing jokes upon such a holy man in the future and to send a letter of apology for what had happened. Back home, Shah Muhammad sent a very submissive letter seeking directions from Reshi Pir in seemingly conflicting theistic dictums by writing,

"Complements presented by me, an ignoramus, son of an ignoramus, grandson of an ignoramus, humblest of the humble, if I say I am humble. God says I am thou. If I say I am He religion taboo's it as impertinence. Please reply and solve the dilemma".

To this Reshi Pir wrote the following reply,

"The travellers passing over the desert of religion have traversed it in such manner that neither the dust of losing their way has ever settled on, nor the thorn of degradation has ever pierced the hem of their garment, because God is and will be".

He advised Shah Muhammad that *"one should be a preacher of the laws of religion, as searcher after religion and sincerely devoted to religion as sweetmeat is made by combination of sugar butter and flour, implying the one ever pervading, One Indivisible Real Essence in that was, is and will be".*

Once in 1663 A.D. when Aurangzeb was in Kashmir he told Reshi Pir that each time he ate his meals blood came into his sight and requested him to explain its reasons and deliver him off the curse. Reshi Pir told him that it was the blood of innocent Sarmad whom he had put to death. It is pertinent to recall here that Sarmad was a renowned and a well known *Sufi* ascetic and a pantheist who used to go about nude, ministering by singing in his own smooth flowing verse that was full of mystic fervour and lofty spirit which rose above the wrangle of sects cherishing the truth inherent in all creeds.

One day in 1647 A.D. he walked by the palace at Delhi, loudly singing a song. Aurangzeb's daughter Zebu-n-nisa, herself a gifted poetess and patron of literary men looked out from a balcony to hear him. Sarmad beheld her and bawled out,

"There are four things which dispel sorrow from the heart. What four !"

Replied Zebu-n-nisa,

"Wine a green sward, running water and the face of a beautiful woman".

Aurangzeb who was sitting at a window in the next room over heard this indelicate verse and admonished his daughter on her frivolous behaviour. She then changed what she had told just then and told Aurangzeb that she replied Sarmad's query thus,

"Prayer and fasting and rosary and repentance craving grace".

On hearing this the Emperor upbraided Sarmad asking what purpose he had to wander about near the palace which housed his harem. He was arrested and order for his hanging was passed. Sarmad pleaded to all those who were witness to the incident by slating,

"O, *intelligent clever people try to render some help in my affair. Bring my sweetheart to me. Entrust her my dead body and if she kisses my two cheeks, if....*

Uttering these words Sarmad fell down dead. Those present at this tragic scene pleaded with the king that Sarmad was innocent and several of them conjectured what Sarmad had intended to say after *"if.* Jami a learned poet also present on the occasion completed Sarmad's unfinished plea by saying that he intended to say, *"If I revive to life do not wonder".*

On this Aurangzeb was requested that Zebu-n-nisa might be asked to kiss Sarmad's face which she did and back came to life Sarmad and earned the king's pardon too. Sometime later Sarmad yet again in his usual naked condition bawling his verse passed in front of Aurangzeb while he was offering his prayers. The incident annoyed the emperor. The uncompromising monist Sarmad had uttered,

"He who has invested you with the emperor's Crown clad me completely in the garb of distress. He put dresses on all those whom he saw sinful. On the sinless He conferred the robe of nakedness".

Following this happening Muslim theologians sat in judgement and sentenced Sarmad to gallows. Mounting the scaffold Sarmad made his last address to Aurangzeb.

"I feel no shame for barefootedness nor desire for kingdom and throne. O, the air whif convey the message that my head fell exclaiming that you are the Emperor of an empire, I the emperor of Poverty".

To revert back to Reshi Pir's miracles. He told Aurangzeb to ever remember the sage advice, *"Lay not the hand of disapproval on anything you see be it good or bad. To call the divine handiwork faulty is to find fault with the God. Though there are many religions yet none is forbidden. The gardener takes same care for all the flowers of different hue in a flower bed".*

Invoking Sarmad's spirit Reshi Pir beseeched him to excuse Aurangzeb. Thereafter the Emperor never saw blood in his food. Reshi Pir further advised Aurangzeb that he should earn his own daily bread by some honest manual labour and refrain from taking anything for his own food from the public treasury. Thence forth Aurangzeb began to work during his leisure time as a scribe of the *Quran* and whatever money he got for the copies made, he lived thereon.

While the above detailed account of life of Pandit Reshi Pir stands the test of history there are several stories connected to his feats of miracles and some have survived the long time since they were performed by him. It is said once some Muslims were betting about jumping over a deep and wide ditch at Hari Parbat but none would come forward to do it. Reshi Pir happened to pass by at the time and he humped clear over it. He won the wager and after making a bow towards Goddess Sharika at Hari Parbat went away. The people who had gathered around though were amazed at his feat taunted him for bowing before the stone. Reshi Pir sermonized them by staling, *"As a Hindu ever performs idol worship in his life He, when dead is burnt and consumed and not placed under the burden of a stone. In truth idol worship is not a shameful practice. No Muslim after dying is without the load of a tomb stone. "*

It is said that there was a saint in the time of Reshi Pir whose name was Zuy. He used to practice acute penance and *yoga* but kept its practice hidden from the people. He was believed to be a shy simpleton and for this was nick named as *Zanana* Zuy. On day Reshi Pir who knew his worth by inspiration went with large number of disciples to his house to pay respects to him, but when Zuy heard of his coming he inferred that his secret of practicing *yoga* had become known to people. He lay down and made his soul part from his mortal coil. Soon after Reshi Pir reached the house and was very much grieved at not being able to see him before he died. Though Reshi Pir with his great clarivoyantic force had perceived *Zanana* Zuy's *yogic* feats, it is the only known instance in his life where he was outclassed by another seer in the display of divine powers.

There are two legends connected to Reshi Pir's life which border historical authenticity. One relates to an event when one day Reshi Pir went to Bohr! Kadal to collect his fixed presents of cash. The Bohras did not want to pay him and instead offer him a pill of opium to eat. He swallowed the pill but a milkman of saintly disposition appeared on the spot who out of love for him poured milk mixed with almonds and sugar in his mouth. The opium produced no effect on Reshi Pir. Soon after a fire broke in Bohri Kadal and all houses and shops were gutted accept the house of milkman which got saved. A chronogram of this fire had survived a stone that existed until the last century which read. *"The fire of the collector of money" V. S. 1726*. The date corresponds to 1666 A.D.

The other relates to an event when Reshi Pir was told by his aged mother that she desired to go and bathe at the Sunda Brari *(Trisandhya)* an intermittent spring in Brang area. But she was unable to go there due to her advanced age. Instead Reshi Pir told his mother to go to the neighbouring *ghat* of the *Vitasta* with him and he would cause her to bathe in the water of Sunda Brari. She went with him and on reaching the *ghat* Reshi Pir bade Sunda Brari appear by uttering a couplet which meant, *"What power has Sunda Brari that she will not go forth to receive Shahan Shah Reshi"*. No sooner did he utter the

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couplet the water gurgled out from the parapet wall of the *ghat* and began to flow in the river. His mother then bathed in it after which it is stated that it ceased to flow again.

Reshi Pir is equally well known for causing miracles to happens for accommodating the wishes of his disciples. One day Nanak Shah came running to Reshi Pir and told him in distress that his mother had suddenly died. He requested him to revive her back to life. But Reshi Pir told him, *"though a person whose span of life had come to an end must die, yet his mother could be brought: to life again provided he was willing to sacrifice some years to her from his own life"*. Nanak Shah express the desire that 14 years could be taken from his span of life. To this Reshi Pir advised his disciple that he should go back to his home and break 14 water chestnuts near her head and eat the kernels and she would revive and live for 14 years. Nanak Shah did as he was told. His mother revived and did not die until fourteen years had passed.

In his old age Reshi Pir lost the power of walking. He crawled about on wooden sandals. Sometimes he was carried in a palanquin by his disciples. He died at the age of sixty years at Srinagar on the same 6th of the dark fortnight of Baisakh (the lunar day and month of his birth) in V.S. 1754 (1697 A.D.) he was cremated at his home *ghat* in the Bhattyar locality below the 5th bridge in Srinagar.

One of his wooden sandals survived as a relic and remained preserved even until present times. The other one was lost in Reshi Pir lifetime in a fire by which 2100 houses were destroyed. This incident has survived in the record of a poet whose name though is lost but the lines are still remembered by the elderly Kashmiris which go as *"Such a fire raged by the wrath of God that night. That ten and two thousand and ninety houses were gutted"*.

The unit of his remaining sandals was put in a shrine originally built by Pandit Nand Ram Tiku which on account of destruction by fire was later reconstructed by Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi. Reshi Pir had one son named Rahanand who was also affectionately called Rahanwab. After his fathers demise he gave up the world and became a recluse. Rahanand had twin sons named Lal Pandit and Kashi Pandit. Lal Pandit carried on the duties of a simple but pious householder but Kashi Pandit fired by the love of divine turned out to become an ascetic and went away to Jodhpur where he died.

Despite more than 300 years having elapsed since the time Reshi Pir lived his memory still endures. His deeds will defy the flight of time. Kashmiris remember and recall his miracles as inspiring antidotes to the misfortunes and miseries of their life. They still have faith in his spirit as a resolver of difficulties. Kashmiri Pandits rever him as a bridge between Being and Becoming. Until up to as recent when migration of Kashmiri Pandits took place in 1989 they would vow to deliver at his shrine a cash present on fulfilment of a desire or overcoming some trouble and conformably to his or her vow would pay immediately thereafter. This tradition was called as *Mushkil asan.* In return they would get some roasted rice bread and some wild rue *(ispband).* The amount of present and things received in return at the shrine were fixed by Reshi Pir himself in his life time.

SECTION - III

Asi aesya tai asi aasav
Asi dore kaer patavath
Shivas sorena zyun ta marun
Ravas sorena atagath.

We only existed in the past,
We only shall exist in the future.
Shiva cannot but appear and disappear,
The Sun cannot cease rising and setting.

CHAPTER 9

PARMANAND AND HIS 'KRISHNA LEELA'

—MOTI LAL KHAR

The cultural life of Kashmir has had the impress of great mystics. Often we witness a happy blending of poetry and mysticism in it. Among these mystics a prominent place goes to Parmanand, the great saint-poet of southern Kashmir.

Pandit Nand Ram, Parmanand being his pen-name, was born in 1791 A.D. in Seer village near Mattan (Martand), one of the famous holy places of India. Both his father, Krishna Pandit, and his mother, Sarswati Devi, were of religious bent of mind. Child Nand Ram got his education in Persian, the court language of Kashmir those days, in his own village. He also learned Sanskrit from Sadhus who used to visit and stay at Martand temple. Nand Ram was a precocious child and his teachers and schoolmates were greatly impressed by his sincere devotion and inborn knowledge about spiritual matters. He attained mastery over Persian and wrote verses in that language under the pen-name "Gareeb".

Early Life

After his schooling, Permanand was married to Mal Ded, a girl from his own village. She was an ill-tempered lady, yet the tolerant nature of the saint took it in its stride. His father was a Patwari in Mattan village and after his death Nand Ram was offered his father's post. A Patwari was looked down upon by people in those days. Parmanand had no aptitude for this post, but witness compelled by the circumstances he had to accept it in order to sustain himself and his family.

Meditation

Parmanand was greatly influenced by the scenic beauty of his village and its surroundings. He would be found sitting under a tree absorbed in deep meditation. He would compose verses in Kashmiri there and then. Unlike other Patwaris of his time he never accepted bribes. On the contrary, he would at times pay land revenue from his own pocket on behalf of poor peasants. Being bold and frank Parmanand made sarcastic remarks in his verses about the then despotic rule even at great risk. He was put to severe hardship by his officers to whom he would never bow or flatter. But by God's grace he escaped dismissal or incarceration. Like Guru Nanak Dev, Parmanand spent all he had to feed Sadhus to the great distress and chagrin of his wife. Parmanand's poor wife often rebuked him for not caring for his family.

Seeing this non-attachment to the things of the world even at a young age, people living in the locality came to realise that Parmanand was born to fulfil a definite purpose and held him in high esteem. After he left his job, devotees would arrange for the maintenance of his family. Especially his Muslim neighbour, Salaha Ganai, the headman of the village, stood by him through thick and thin, knowing the worth and merit of Parmanand.

The devotional songs of Parmanand are on the lips of all Kashmiris. His poetic collections are available in both Devanagri and Persian scripts. Master Zinda Kaul, the famous poet of Kashmir, who edited the poetic collections of Parmanand was very much influenced by his poetry. Pandit Narayan Kaul, and his beloved disciple-poet Pandit Laxman Bhat of village Nagam, also have edited some of his collections.

Parmanand was an eloquent and a gifted poet endowed with a forceful style. His devotional songs and hymns in praise of Lord Krishna are to this day on the lips of every Kashmiri. His *Sudhama Charettar* is regarded as one of its best Kashmiri renderings. His spiritual hymns and *Leelas* are recited in temples and on marriage ceremonies or on festivals such as Janamashtami or Shivratri. His style is direct and effective.

Philosophy

Parmanand's philosophy is best depicted in *Karam Bhoomika* where he says that the highest good is only attainable when the self is subdued and that perennial joy is the reward obtained by the mastery of one's own self. To overcome one's own self, according to him, is to wage the toughest war in the battlefield of life and to subdue one's own self is the noblest of all victories.

Religion for Parmanand was not mere ritual and formal worship but something far more fundamental and a matter deeply contented with the soul. In the poem, *Amarnath Yatra,* he describe the different paths and stages an aspirant has to pass in spiritual Sadhna or practice. Most of his poems are allegorical. His poem, *Radha Suamber,* is his masterpiece and is regarded as one of the most precious contributions to devotional literature. To read Parmanand or listen to his *Leelas* is to live through a religious experience which gives Param-Anand-eternal bliss.

Fascinating

Parmanand's poetry testifies to a fascinating kinship between mystics all over India. His writings provide convincing proof of the universality of the concept that Truth is one, though sages call it by different names. In his famous poem, *Shiv-Lugan.* Parmanand propounds the unity of the One and the many. The infinite and the finite are absolutely identical, according to him. In another poem. *The Scenes of the Tree and its Shade,* he says that God is attained by merging the finite with the infinite. He asserts that by getting freedom from our worldly fetters we can attain salvation.

Parmanand was loved and adored by Hindus and Muslims alike. Salaha Ganai gave him succour in his old age, when Parmanand's kith and kin had died before him, leaving him all alone. He had no son or daughter of his own. At about 90, this great mystic poet died in 1879 A.D. Pandit Laxman Bhat wrote his death date in his elegy in which he lamented. "The singing nightingale of the garden became silent making the garden desolate".

(courtesy, Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 10

MAHATMA KRISHNA JOO RAZDAN

—ASHOK HANDOO

Those of us who have listened to the reverberating devotional songs made immortal by Tibet Bakal. Rehmatullah Khan and Kailash Mehra by their melodious renditions would realise the deep poetic instinct of the great poet of Kashmir—Krishna Joo Razdan. He was among the brightest stars that appeared on the horizon in the later part of the 19th century Kashmir (1850-1926). A multifaceted personality, he was a poet, a saint, an astrologer and an astronomer. He wrote poetry not only in Kashmiri but in Urdu and Persian also. Unfortunately, most of what he wrote in Urdu and Persian has not been preserved for the posterity.

Krishna Joo was versatile in Hindi and Sanskrit as well. His poetry sprang from the depths of his heart. At times, he would go into a state of ecstasy and dance while singing his renderings. He had a rare distinction of gaining popularity during his life time with his *Bahare-Gulshan-e-Kashmir* becoming popular not only in the state but outside also, even in far West. His poems have been rendered in Devanagari also as *Shivlagan, Krishna Vani* and *Krishna Darshun.* The books are prescribed for various academic courses and competitive examinations.

Krishna Joo Razdan touched new heights in poetry and philosophy but what distinguished him most was his deeply philosophical and devotional poetry of the category of Vaakh and Leela—in appreciation of the Almighty. In this, he was influenced to a great extent by Lall Ded, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani and his contemporary Parmanand (1791-1870). Parmanand lived in Mattan, Anantnag, some distance away from his village, Vanpuh, in Kulgam tehsil on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. Though young, Krishna Joo would visit Parmanand quite often and spend time with him to get his blessings. He experienced a unique solace in his company. Krishna Joo's achievements have been widely acknowledged by a number of literatteurs, on top of them the master scholar Abdul Ahad Azad who travelled to every nook and comer of Kashmir to draw his conclusion.

Krishna Joo's capabilities were essentially God-given gifts. The handsome, black-bearded poet was a Shiv Bhakt and a devotee of Shakti. He was a yogi who spent long spells in seclusion, but in doing so he did not ignore his family. His guru Mukund Ram Shastri of Ali Kadal, Srinagar, was a great Sanskrit scholar who became the beacon-light in shaping the course of his life.

From the very childhood, Krishna Joo had the blessings of Goddess Ragnya Bhawani. It is said that one day his parents went to Manzgam to offer prayers to the goddess in the temple and despite his insistence to accompany them, he was left at home.

Krishna Joo was deeply disturbed to the extent that he stopped taking anything by mouth. When he fell asleep, the Goddess came in his dreams, put her hand on his head and fed him with milk. The child came back to his spirits with Saraswati on his lips. The Goddess of Manzgam thus gave her blessings to him at a very early age as he started entering the realms of spirituality, covering one milestone after the other.

In later days he started making predictions also to the utter surprise of everyone. Once Maharaja Pratap Singh got a message from Poonch that the Raja of Poonch was seriously ill. He consulted Krishna Joo and was in turn advised to instruct the people of Poonch to prepare for the last offerings.

Soon a second message was received which said that the king was improving. This caused a great deal of commotion in the Darbar but Krishna Joo insisted that the king would not survive. And that is what precisely happened. The king died just the next day.

On another occasion, a lady spread her paddy to dry in the open sun. When Krishna Joo passed that way he advised her to remove it immediately as heavy rains were expected. The lady would not believe him as it was bright sunshine. She repented soon.

Krishna Joo used to visit Khirbhavani temple occasionally. Once the Maharaja wanted to test his spiritual capacities. He went to the temple at the same point of time thinking that he would ask Krishna Joo to change the colour of the temple spring. It so happened that even before the Maharaja could say so, Krishna Joo took him aside and told him that they should first offer prayers to the Goddess as her disciple was on test. Soon the spring water started changing its colour. This further strengthened the ruler's belief in the spiritual attainments of the great poet.

That he spent the most productive part of his life during the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh also contributed to his achievements. Since the Maharaja himself was a deeply religious person and took keen interest in the literary and social activities, it provided a conducive atmosphere for the saint-poet to flourish. Maharaja Pratap Singh's rule was comparatively an era of peace. Krishna Joo came in contact with the King through two of his Darbaris Anand Koul Kilam and Divalal Vessu. The meeting satisfied his quest for spirituality. The Maharaja in turn called him Rajanuk—the one who showed him the path. It is said that the Maharaja would honour the poet with Rs.11 and sweets, each time he would move from Srinagar to Jammu through his village. While Krishna Joo would accept the Maharaja's offering, his sense of self-respect always remained predominant.

Though his contemporary poets also were of eminence, Krishna Joo stood out in bold relief. They included Rasul Mir, Maqbool Kralwari, Mehmood Gami and Shamas Faqir.

The village he lived in is entered in revenue records as Khirman Ganesh Raina—the estate of Ganesh Raina named after his father. Ganesh Raina had left the village after a severe drought. When he returned the Maharaja bestowed on him the land in the village for cultivation, much against his wishes.

As his end came near, Krishna Joo called all his family members and told them what was going to happen. His only son, Shankar Nath, who lost control on himself was politely told about the secret of life. Krishna Joo spent the next three days in total silence sipping fluids only. When the family members started weeping at the appointed time, Krishna Joo told them that they should not behave like that in the presence of the messenger of death. Silence prevailed and Krishna Joo attained Nirvana.

(courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 11

SUFI POET, SWACH KRAL : A CRITICAL READING OF HIS POEMS

—A.N. DHAR

Swach Kral rightfully holds a place among the noted and venerated Sufi poets of Kashmir. Fine in quality, his verse is Sufi in inspiration and largely mystical in content. Believed to have been born at the village *Yandar* (यॅन्दुॅर) in or around the year 1774, he passed away in 1854 A.D. (when he was an octagenarian). It is said that after he left this world, all the members of his clan shifted permanently to Pulwama. His grave has been identified at the place of his birth, on which a tombstone was placed only sometime in the 20th century.

Not much biographical information is available on Swach Kral. It is almost confirmed that he was illiterate and had not received any formal education. Yet he was a gifted poet; the number of his poems that have come down to us is, however, small—there are in all just thirteen lyrics of his that have been incorporated in the section devoted to him in the anthology titled *Kashmir Sufi Shairi,* Vol. I, edited by Motilal Saqi, that was brought out by the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar in 1985. Considering his creative ability as a gifted poet, it could be legitimately surmised that he composed a far greater number of poems than the published pieces available to us today—meaning obviously a loss to posterity that might have possibly been avoided if he had some schooling. Then he would have preserved all that he composed. Swach Kral, no doubt, has attracted some critical attention but he has not been much written.

upon though he is otherwise popular and much talked about. As a poet, he is still potential and deserves more scholarly attention.

Notwithstanding his lack of any formal education, Swach Kral was lucky in two things—in being the son of Arif Kral, who too was a Sufi poet, and a disciple of the veteran sufi saint, Momin Sahib, author of the book *Kashir Mantakulteer*—a shortened Kashmiri version of the much longer Persian epic titled *Mantakulteer*, composed by the celebrated poet, Sheikh Farid-ud-Din Attar. As we gather from Motilal Saqi's brief biographical note on Swatch Kral, provided in the *Kashmir Sufi Shairi, Vol. I,* the potter's profession was forced on the poet by his parents much against his own inclination. He affirms this in his poem 'पॉदुॅ कुनि गछिना आदॅम जाथ' (How I wish a true human being were born somewhere).

These are the relevant lines from the poem, followed immediately by my translation :

सतुॅ वुहुर वॉतिथ कॅरहम बॅ रहमी,
हतुॅ बॅद्य चोब पेम ह्वनरि बापथ।
पतुॅ लो'गुम द्‌यदुॅ बॉबु कारस नुॅ कैमी,
पॉदुॅ कुनि गछिना आदम जाथ।।

I was treated mercilessly, beaten a hundred times
When I was a seven-year old boy;
pressurised into learning my parents' skills,
I had to submit to their will;
My own inclination was to learn
How to become truly human
(which is an achievement in itself).

Swach Kral as well bewails the fact of his having been illiterate in the same poem :

सास वाँसि वॉतिथ मज़ारस चॅमी,
पास पकि कॅल्यमुॅकुय शफाअत।
क्या वनि स्वछ क्राल पानुॅ ओस व्वमी,
पॉदुॅ कुनि गछिना आदॅम ज़ात।।

Thousands, having attained years, got buried in their graves,
Only the *Kalima* (the word of God) is going to save them,
What can I, Swach Kral, say in this regard,
Having been illiterate myself ?
How I wish men learnt to become human !

Before coming to Swach Krals[2] poems proper, it needs to be mentioned here that Sufism, which had flourished in Persia as the "mystical dimension of Islam"[2] easily found easily found a fertile soil in our country, conspicuously so in the valley of Kashmir. This happened largely because the Hindu *Upanishads* and Sufi mysticism alike lay stress on purification and contemplation as indispensable to the illumination of the soul and as the only reliable means of God realization. The Sufi doctrine of *Wahadutulwajud* notably, stressing the oneness of existence, is in tune with what the Indian *Vedanta* also maintains. Both are compatible with the non-dualistic philosophy underlying Kashmiri Saivism. Further, symbolism of the 'journey' is invariably used in the mystical literature of all hues, across faiths and cultures. Thus "The way, the Quest, the Pilgrimage are familiar symbols in mysticism." The sufis maintain that "the journey winds through seven valleys : valleys of quest, love, knowledge, detachment, unity, amazement and finally annihilation".[3] Such concepts and terms are echoed at a number of places in Swacha Kral's verse in appropriate contexts.

It is befitting to quote here the following lines from Swach Kral's father Arif Kral's poem तस छु प्यालन म्वये म्वये' (His cups cups are brimming over with wine)—the one poem that comes at the close of the section devoted to Swach Kral in the anthology mentioned :

मस द्युतनम तुॅ चोवुस कलवालन,
तस छु प्यालन म्वये म्वये।

पानुॅ थुर्‌य बानुॅ ॲम्य क्रालन,
वुछतुॅ जान क्या छिये छये।

कॅंह छि हेल्य कॅल्य कॅंह, म्वल्य लालन,
तस छु प्यालन म्वये म्वये।।

I was served nectar by the cup-bearer,
His cups are brimming over with wine;
The potter himself has shaped the clay into pots,
They look so pretty;
Some are asymmetrical
And some precious as jwells,
All are brimful with wine.

The reader can infer from the sweetnes and charm of this verse that Swacha Kral owes his poetic talent to the genetic factor as well.

My main task in this paper is now to concentrate on the primary material in the shape of Swach Kral's poems. To give the readers an idea of his standing as a Sufi poet I must turn to the poems and project the contents through my free-verse English translation of the significant lines and portion, discuss the text as I move from one poem to another, offering my comments and observations wherever needed.

The first poem in the section devoted to Swach Kral (in the anthology mentioned) is titled 'खुदावदं इलाही' (Khudavand Illahi). It is obviously a religious poem addressed by a faithful Muslim to God. The concluding lines speak of the poet's awareness of what true spirituality involves - a cleansing of the senses (in fact of the powers of perception) as a prerequisite for the 'illumination' of the soul.

स्वच्छ क्राल करान तस पयवदं
यस आसि दिलस सफॉई।

छॅलिथ पानस द्युन गछ़ि रंदॅु,
खवदा वंदॅु इलॉही।।

Swach Kral seeks him (or her)
As his soul-mate,
Who is pure of heart,
The aspirant should cleanse and chisel himself.

The next poem 'बो बहानय' (I'm a non-entity) is mystical in tone and content. Deeply religious at the same time, it goes into the question of man's origin, stressing the divinity and oneness of God. It significantly makes use of the sacred terms 'Allah hoo' and 'Il-Allah'. The poem begins with a query into the nature of 'I' or the little self, which is followed by the affirmation that "God was there, all by himself."

हा पानॅु बो' कुस गोस,
पानय ओस बो' बहानय।

माजि ये'लि जास थनय प्योस,
वुछुम ज़ून तॅु अफ्राबय।
युथुय आस त्युथुय गोस,
पानय ओस बो' बहानय।।

Ah me, who am I ?
He (God) was there all by himself,
I'm a non-entity myself;

When I was born to my mother,
I witnessed the sun and moon;
I left this world as I'hd come,
I'm a non-entity
While God is eternally there.

As the poem progressmes, the poet tells us how self-introspection enabled him to find answers to the perplexing questions bearing on the nature of Reality; he gives us a vivid account of the spiritual transformation he underwent. Here are the significant lines in which the words 'ज़राब खानु' (mint) and 'ज़रॅब' are used as related metaphrs; the world 'coin' (manufactured in the mint) is not directly mentioned but implied.

ज़राबरवानुम दो'द म्योन पोस,
ज़रुब प्यव इलाह अलाह।

सराफ खानॅु में शख कोस,
पानय ओस बॅ बहानय।।

My skin got burnt at the mint,
The words 'Il Allah' were imprinted on it;
It was at the bank that I knew for sure
What my precise value was
(as the coin I was shaped into),
I realized too that I'm nobody,
God having been there forever.

Further onwards, the poet introduces wine imagery, throwing back to the Persian sufis using such terms as 'मस' (nectar/wine), 'साकी' (cup-bearer), 'शराब खानॅु' (wine-house). The following lines reflect the poet's awareness of the gain he has made in terms of self-knowledge or God-consciousness.

में ना ज़ोन हमॅु ओस,
गरि म्यानि ओस शहनशाह।

कुस छुम दुश्मन कुस छुम दोस,
पानय ओस बो' बहानय।।

Ignorant was I
That the Emperor in-dwelt me;
Friend or foe I've none,
I'm a non-entity

While God alone really exists,
He has ever been there.

In the lines that follow, the poet introduces the *via-negativa* motif, that we often come across in mystical literature. The word 'केहंनय' (nothing) is ambiguous (meaning also nothing); it is not to be mistaken for what is *literally* nothing. It also suggests what is 'beyond' or 'transcendent'—'something' that can at best be felt or faintly perceived but not articulated clearly. All such term elude our discursive understanding. While they render the Divine into a mysterious Being, they help to answer our perception :

केहंनय ओस तॅु क्याहताम ओस,
केहंनस मानि हा छु क्या।
केंहनय मानि वनन कोस
पानय ओस बो' बहानय।।

Through there was nothing to see,
Something all the smae was there;
What does 'nothing' signify as such ?
Who interprets or explain the meaning of 'nothing' ?
God himself was there,
I'm a non-entity.

What the word 'केंहनय' ('nothing' implying 'nothing') conveys in this verse comes close to the concept of 'divine dark' which is parallelled by similar concepts deignated by appropriate terms in other varieties of mysticism including Hindu mysticism. These are the concluding lines of the poem :

स्वछ क्राल वनान वुछान गोस,
केंहनय ओस गॉरि अलाह।
बो' वनॅुनॅु निशे वॅसिथ प्योस,
पानय ओस बो' बहानय।।

Swach Kral says that he-witnessed
Nothing was there but God,
I was struck dumb, speech luded me.
I'm a non-entity,
God has been there forever.

The line 'I was struck dumb, speech eluded me' is typically mystical suggesting experiences that belong to "The world of silence". Mystic "silence", signifying the breakdown of linguistic communication, implies an "unfolding from within", what is experienced inwardly, tasted but is, otherwise, "inexpressible".

The next poem 'अमरि खो'दा मॉन्य तव' (Follow God's command) is, strictly speaking, a religious poem that is didactic in tone. It is addressed by the poet to his co-religionists, exhorting them to follow the teachings of the holy *Koran.* It enjoins on a Muslim to offer Nimaz five times a day. However, the first line of the poem should appeal to men of all religious faiths; it urges the believers to look upon the world as ephemeral and perishable :

फॉनी संसार ज़ॉन्य तव,
अमरि खो'दा मॉन्य तव।

Know this world to be mortal
And obey God's command.

I now take up the poem 'यि छु गुमानय' (This is your self-conceit) that has gained the special admiration of the lovers of poetry in the valley besides general popularity. It says profound things about the spiritual aspirant's pursuit of the Divine seen as a mystical journey or adventure. Swach Kral gives poetic utterance herein to his intimate knowledge of the Sufi way that is quite in accord with what the *Vedantist* too would accept as valid. Before we discuss the poem at some length, I reproduce it below in full :

अरव चुॅ तुॅ बे'यि बुॅ गॅज़ंर मबा,
ह्वबा यि छुय गुमानय।
यथ फॉन्य सरायि द्युन छुय शबा,
अथ मज़ं मोदिम दुकानय।
सॅदरस मज़ं बाग छय जुनुॅ डबा,
तथ मज़े बॅसिथ छु पानय।
नय तति ने' न्दुॅर नय तति शबा,
ह्वबा यि छुय गुमानय।
दर् दुॅकि नारय बर तो ब्यबा,
हरुद तुॅ सोंत छुय बहानय।
मर्दियि पनुॅने वनतो हुबाबा,
ह्वबा यि छुय गुमानय।
वुम्बुॅर पनुॅन्य मोकर तबाह,
चे हसॉ लोगुथ बहानय।

दो' ग्न्यारुॅ सॅूत्यन लगान दबा,
हबा यि छुय गुमानय।
दिलस पनॅुनिस गंडतो हिसाबा,
कॅलिस कति छुय मकानय।
चे कति लो'गयो मस शराबा,
हबायि छुय गुमानय।
पीरुॅय मोज तय पीरुॅय बबा,
पीरुॅय छु शम्‌शेर बिर्‌हनय।
मुय ज्ऱ्बॅु सॅूत्यन करान ज़बह,
हबा यि छुय गुमानय।
ज़चन छाबा दपान कबा,
तथ छुय दराज़ दामानय।
पो'त फेर काँछा दियो खबा,
हबा यि छुय गुमानय।
कॉल्य रोज़ि महशर लगि अरवशबा,
तते अॅजंरी सु पानय।
ब्यो'न ब्यो'न सार्‌य्न ह्य्न मुहसबा,
हबा यि छुय गुमानय।
स्वछ क्राल करान तस मर्‌हबा,
युस गव ज़्यनय देवानय,
मॅरिथ हुरान तस मर्‌तबा,
हवा यि छुय गुमानय।।

Don't think in terms of 'you' and 'I' (as separate entities),
It's your self-conceit
That makes you discriminate thus;
You've just to spend a night
At this temporal inn (the world we live in)
Don't set up a shop here
Die as you must before long;
There stands the moonlit balcony
In the midst of the sea,
God himself indwells it—
Sleep nor night is known there;
Fill your heart with love's fire,
Knowing that autumn and spring are ephemeral,
Be valorous and sing of love,

Fritter not away your precious life;
Remaining occupied with more frivolities,
Practising duality brings about one's downfall,
Look upon your spiritual teacher
As your father and mother;
He serves as the naked sword
That deals a death-blow to your false ego;
Rags cannot be mistaken for garments—
A garment is shapely, cut to the proper dimensions—
Look back lest someone should hit you from behind;
On the Day of Judgement
All will be called upon to render accounts,
God himself will then dispense justice;
Swach Kral showers praise on the person
Who is seized by divine 'madness'
Just before he is born,
He attains stature through self-conquest
(That involves dying into life);
Discriminate not between 'you' and 'I'
Out of self-conceit.

The poem, as we see, begins on an important note : stressing the essential *oneness* of mankind as the very correlate of divine unity. This is compatible with Islam as a monotheistic faith. Swach Kral perceives this world as transitory, comparable to an inn that is nobody's permanent abode. This is reminiscent of Omar Khayam's poem translated into English by Fitzgerald wherein the world is depicted as "this battered *caravansarai*". Swacha Kral then presents another image : of the moonlit balcony surrounded by an expanse of water, the *sadar* (lake or sea). The balcony is conceived by the poet as inhabited by God. Presumably Swach Kral thinks of the human body itself as indwelt by God—which is maintained and emphasized by seers and mystics of all hues, who describe God as the over-soul or universal soul that is immanent as well as transcendent. Onwards in the poem, Swach Kral speeks of God as the Mute One who is houseless. "'कॅलिस कति छुय मकानय". This can be linked with the emphasis that Islam lays on the 'formless' and on divine trascendence. The poet or saint in Swach Kral visualizes God as watching this world from afar as a 'mute' witness. Then the poet speaks very highly of his *peer* (preceptor or mentor), who imparts to him all that the aspirant needs to achieve self-conquest. Mastering the self is considered a vital requirement by the *sufis* and *vedantists* alike. It is a feat that involves a great sacrifice on the part of the spiritual seeker, best conveyed by what the mystics mean by 'ज़िंदय मरुन' or 'dying into life'.

We move on to the poem 'मंजुॅ नो दूर्‌यर छुय' (He is closest to you, not apart by a hair breadth). It stresses man's innate divinity and his spiritual kinship with God:

पनुॅनि बे'बि ह्यतो ब्वय,
मंजुॅ नो म्वय दूर्‌यर छुय।
तोरय आख करान बय,
परान आरव अलाह हू।
फेरान चर्‌खुॅ तमि कुय सय,
मंजुॅ नो म्वय दूर्‌यर छुय।।

Look within and feel who dwells there,
He is closest to you, not a hair-breadth apart;
As you come from afar in a state of awe,
Uttering the words "Allah hoo" (meaning 'nothing but God exists')
The wheel comes full circle
Because God wills it,
He is not the least apart from you.

As in the preceding poem, in the present poem too Swach Kral dwells upon the importance of the spiritual teacher (*Peer* or *Guru*):

पीरस पतुॅ कर इक्तिदा,
सीरुक माने बावी सुय।
सो'नस युथ नुॅ मेली ल्वय
मजुॅ नो म्वय हूर्‌यर छुय'।।

Follow the teacher's instruction,
He will unfold to you the secret and its meaning,
Ensuring that you attain the Truth unalloyed,
God is not the least away from you.

In the lines that fellow, the poet reiterates what all mystics almost categorically maintain—that in spite of achieving an intimate contact with God, experiencing and interacting with the Divine, they feel tongue—tied and cannot speak a word about what they have experienced.

अयानॅु निशे पय दर पय,
बयानॅु निशि खोच़ान ज़्यव।
रेहानस नखॅु शूब्या स्वय,
मंजॅु नो म्वय दूऱ्यर छुय।।

The Truth ever stares you in the eye,
Yet the tongue dare not describe it -
As the dead-nettle cannot grow
Alongside the sweet-basil.

The poem that comes next titled 'दप्योमय बालॅुयारस' (I said to my childhood friend) records an imaginary dialogue between the poet as the persona, the spiritual seeker, and God seen as the beloved Friend (of the childhood days). Seemingly a narrative poem, it shows the poetic persona having an intimate relationship with the divine Master. The whole poem constitutes a series of questions posed by the poet (in the first person) to God visualized as the Friend (of the beloved days of youth). The answers given are brief, crisp and pointed, loaded with meaning, suggestive and diffiult to grasp immediately. On the whole, the poem is rich is mystical content. Let us look at the text of the poem :

दप्योमय बॉलुयारस यॉऱ्य लागव,
तॅम्य हो'पनम बोज़ॅुवुन छुस कोनॅु लागव।
दप्योमस बोज़नावतम छुस बॅ बंदय,
तॅम्य दो' पनम बोज़ॅुवॅुन्य गय शऱमंदय।
दप्योमस यीच़ कॉच़ाह न्वक़्तॅुगीरी,
तॅम्य दो'पनम अदॅुकुस करि दस्तगीरी।
दप्योमस न्वक्तॅु ओस नतुं आवकते,
तॅम्य दो'पनम बावय थावख चॅु कते।
दप्योमस न्वक्तॅु ॲश्कुन बाव मे'ते,
तॅम्य दो'पनम पो'ख्तॅु सपद्यव ॲशॅकुवते।
दप्योमस क्या छु अंदर क्या छु न्यबर,
तम्य दो'पनम ती छु अंदर ती न्यबर।
दप्योमस अदॅु कत्यन छुय चे' मुकाम,
तॅम्य दो'पनम नय छु सुबह नय छु तति शाम।
दप्योमस मे'ति बावतम पनुन आसुन,

तॅम्य दो'पनम पानॅु नैनन ठो'र कासुन।
दप्योमस जामॅु वलॅुन्य छिय चें पानस,
तॅम्य दो'पनम वीह अभिक्य ही लामकानस।
दप्योमस जामॅुकियॅु किन्य छुरव चॅु रंगान,
तॅम्य दो'पनम रंगॅु वॅुन्य' छुस नॅु काँसि मंगान।
दप्योमस छुख चॅु कुनुय ला शरीख,
तफम्य दो'पनम अमि गॅछिथ छु म्योन तॅरीक।
दप्योमस अथ तैरीकस ह्यमय जागय,
तॅम्य दो'पनम हरनॅु चे'शमन स्वर्मॅु लागय।
दप्योमस स्वरमॅु लॉगिथ क्याह छुबनान,
तफम्य दो'पनम पो'ज़, तॅु अपुज़ अदॅु छु ननान।
दपान स्वछ क्राल ॲलिफस मा छे'बॅदी,
छे' पानय खो'दा वंदस खो'दा वॅदी।।

I said to my beloved Friend of childhood days,
"Let us renew our friendship,"
He said in reply, "I grant what you ask for,
Since I refuse none,"
Then I said, "Do answer my queries,
I being a servant of yours,"
He replied, "Those who heeded my utterance,
Felt ashamed of themselves !"
I said, "Why so much of captiousness on your part ?"
He said, "How else would men seek my helping hand ?"
I asked curiously, "The dimensionless point was ever there,
It couldn't have an extraneous cause or origin,"
He said, "If I reveal to you the secret,
How will you keep it".
I said entreatingly, "Pray, reveal to me the mystery of love,"
He said in reply, "love leads to ripeness,"
Then I asked, "What is within and what without,"
He said, "what is within is also without" ?
Then I said, "Pray, tell me where you abide,"
He said, "I abide where there's
Neither morning nor evening,"
I said, "Please impart to me
The knowledge of your Being,"
He replied, "Remove the haze

That obstructs your vision."
I said, "you puṭ on various garbs,"
He said "The unhoused one
Has to assume various shapes and hues,"
I asked, "How do you dye your garments ?"
He quipped, "I don't charge anything for dyeing."
I said, "You are one without a second,"
He replied, "Beyond this is my way,"
I said, "I desire very much to perceive this mystic way,"
He said, "I'll stain your doe-like eyes with collyrium,"
I said, "What does one gain from this ?"
He replied, "The ability to tell the true from the false,"
Swach Kral maintains that the letter *Alif*
Stands free by itself,
God, like wise, commands self-glory".

It can be seen what is presented in this poem in the form of a dialogue between God and the inquisitive God seeker embodies Swach Kral's mystical insights into esoteric truths—based on what he has gained through sustained meditation involving a lot of introspection, self-questioning and self-analysis. Obviously, the contents of the poem conform to the *lore* based on the teachings of Sufism, which seem to be quite in consonance with what the Hindu mystics too maintain.

The poem 'दरुँद महबत' (pain of love) is a deceptively simple poem; it is, at the same time, typically mystical—very suggestive, has a deep import and conveys profound things in an oblique manner:

वॉसिल क्या छे' बनानकथ,
हॉसिल दरुँद महबत।
कथि सूँत्य छय ननान कथ
हॉसिल दरुँद महबत।
कनन यनुँ गॅयम कथ,
वनय कस बॅ स्वय हर्कथ।
पनने शायि पनुँन्य कथ,
हॉसिल दॅरुद महबत।
शमा दान शमा ह्यथ,
पों पुर आव करान गथ।
द्वन्वय दॅद्य तुँ रुद क्या पथ,
हॉलि दरुँद महबत।

आस्मान मो चुँ जानुन कथ,
यि जमीन मुँ जानुन दथ।
वुछॉन गछ़ खो'दॉयहथ,
हॉसिल दरुँद महबत।
ये'मी ख्ययि स्व न्यॉमत,
तॅमी जॉन्य हलावथं
छे'न्य कथ छय कयामथ,
हॉसिल दरुँद महबत।
स्वच्छ क्रालन यनुँ बूज़ कथ,
कथि मंज छय हर्‌कथ।
छुय माने कुनी कथ,
हॉसिल दरुँद महबत।।

What serves as the means (to the spiritual seeker)
Is the spoken word (कथ),
And the 'pain of love' is the attainment;
What is imparted as the 'word'
Reveals the meaning one seeks;
Ever since the word was whispered into my ears,
The vibration it induced in me is incommunicable,
Better keep the secret to yourself;
The candle burning in the container,
The moth hovering around the flame,
Both are consumed in the process,
Leaving nothing behind!
Don't you look upon the sky
As of no significance,
Nor think of this earth
As a mere lump,
Watch them both as God's miracles;
One who tastes the delicacy divine
Knows really what sweetness is,
The mere word has a tremendous potential,
'Pain of love' is the attainment;
Ever since Swach Kral heard the word,
He realized its impact as a 'vibration'
It conveys the essential meaning—
'Pain of love' is the attainment.

The reader will appreciate how dense in meaning this small and simple lyric is as a mystical poem. Its flow is superb and its rhythm quick as well a forceful. Te poem can be singled out as an excellent piece that shows the poet at his best—at once terse and eloquent.

The poem 'प्यारि छम नुँ नेंन्हुॅर तेन्दुॅर' (Oh dear, I'm sleepless) reads like a love poem, pure and simple. However it too has a deep import and has a mystical content. The seeker here is the individual soul, in the feminine role of a lover, and the beloved is God. Herein Swach Kral is following the tradition of the Persian poets in the background and there is a lot in this piece which reminds the reader of the Indian Bhakti poets and also of much Kashmiri verse composed by such celebrities as Habba Khatoon and the 20th century poet Mehjoor. The main theme focusses on the pain that separation brings lovers. The feminine persona in the poem sings her tale of woe, pinning for the Beloved who is none other than God, what we realize as the poem progresses. There are thus many words used in the poem that distinguish it from the poems of earthly love. The tone of the present poem is unmistakably mystical, the theme being sacred and exalted as the reader soon realizes :

प्यारि छम नुँ ने'न्दुॅर यिवान,
आरुॅ करुच़, करुरथस मे'छु मारुमो'त चोनये।
हाँचुॅ कॅर्‌य कॅर्‌य हाँचि़मो लाग काचुॅ जूनि कास्तम ग्रोनये,
कम्यूकाचुॅ गॉजथस वला हाल वुछ म्योन्ये।
ऑरु कॅच कॅरथस मे' छु मारुमोत चोनये।

. . . .

अर्‌शस तुॅ फर्‌शस मज़ छु खो'दा बसुॅ वोनये,
लुॅयन चान्यन रोज़य बर्‌तल तॅत्यथुॅय त्रावस डुलुॅगोनये।
मे' हा ग्रॅज़ं ह्यतो बो'य हा करय चोंज़ुॅतोनये,
आरुॅकॅच़ कॅरथस मे' छु मारुॅमो'त चोनये।

. . . .

त्यो'गुंल कॅम्य सना न्यन्गुल मस त्योगुंल थोवनम ललुॅवोनये,
आरुॅ कॅच कॅरथस में छु मारुॅमो'त चोनये।
हा थरि हुंद गुलाब बरय छुम गछु वोनये,
अछिबल के अछि पोशो गछि डबिकरय वथ्‌रोनये।
बोज़ लछि नाव्यो स्वछ क्रालुन हो वनवोनये,
आरुॅ कॅच् कॅर्‌थस मे' छु मारुॅमो'त चोनये।।

Oh dear, I'm sleepless,
Pay me a visit today, my friend,
Madly in love with you as I'm,
You've made my condition pitiable;
Don't find fault with me on mere pretexts-
Famished am I as love-lorn moon,
Pray see for yourself what my plight is !
God abides in heaven and on earth,
I'll lie down wheresoever there are chinks
For me to look through,
(And have glimpses of you)
Who can swallow a burning charcoal ?
I've been bearing its intoxicating fiery touch'
Ah dear, the rose borne on the branch (that I own)
Will fade soon—this is veily my plight,
O you fine flower of Achibal (a beauty spot),
I'll make you a bed
In a balcony with its walls polished bright,
Oh you, the one bearing a thousand names,
Hear Swach Kral's melodious songs,
Madly in love with you as I'm,
You have made my conditoin pitiable!

We now take up the poem titled 'नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव' (The boat is in water and water in the boat). The title, which occurs in the poem as a refrain, is a typical statement from the lips of a sufi poet. It conveys the poet's belief in the doctrine of *Wahadatulwajud* that stresses the oneness or unity of existence. In the poem, the words 'boat' and 'water' function as related symbols—water standing for Reality or Truth and 'boat' as an attribute of Reality or Truth: we, in fact, recognize God through His attributes. So, both 'boat' and 'water' are inseparable in a way. The attribute has a vital bearing on the object it represents. Thus, though God and man look widely apart, man, in view of his humanness, stands close to God. Significant portions of the poem are reproduced below to provide illustrative support to the brief observations made on the lyric :

जो'यि मज़े बॅसिथ छुय दॅरियाव,
नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव।

न्वक्तुॅ प्यव ऑनस गॉन प्योस नाव,
गॉन सपुन महरम को'रुन टाव टाव।

तमि शे'छि मन्सूर मारनुॅ आव,
नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव।।

Streamlets fill and sustain the river,
Likewise the boat is in water
And water in the boat;
A dot placed above the letter
Transforms it into the letter 'ऑन' गॉन'
It gains in content as a communicative symbol
As Mansur got to know the secret,
He gave it out at the cost of his life.

ठूलय ॲदंरय द्राव जवहर,
न छय तथ तोंत तय न छि तथ पर।
हू हू करान तोरय आव
नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव।।

The young one emerged as a marvel from the egg,
It has neither a beak nor feathers;
It, came from afar
Chanting the sacred words 'हू' 'हू' (hoo, hoo)

खारुॅ वानुॅ नारुॅ पानि कथुॅ कॅन्य द्राव,
शे' स्तुॅर कनि पे'य लछि बैद्य नाव।
हॉकुॅल छय कुनी वति मो राव
नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव।।

The blacksmith forges iron
Into myriad forms,
Using fire and water in the process,
There's but one chain
That links diverse forms;
The boat is in water
And water in the boat.

लूकुॅ हुज़िं लाग नयि मोबर चाव,
युस करि गोंगल सुय करि क्राव।
मदुॅवस स्वछ क्रालुॅ चॖख दुॅय त्राव,
नाव दर आब तय आब दर नाव।

Don't boast of what others have achieved,
He who sows the seeds
Reaps the harvest;

O Swach Kral, give up pride,
Keep you cool and hate none.

यॅम्य सुदुय वो'लुर तय,
तॅम्य सुॅजुॅय नाव।
वो'लरस तुॅ आबस छु कुनय बसाव,
छयन कुनि लो'बुस नतुॅ वाव छस बसाक
नावदर आब तय आब दर नाव।।

He who owns the *Wolur* (lake),
Owns the boat as well—
The lake and water are but one substance,
There's an unbroken chain
Linking all elements,
Having the wind as the substratum.

The above verses amply reveal that Swach Kral has the mystic's perception of the underlying unity of the cosmos. Of course, his mysticism is based on the Sufi tradition rooted in Islam. We notice that he is well aware of the persian mysic Mansur-ul-Hallaj. Who had to lose his life for his unorthodox utterance 'Anul Haq' (I am Truth). The above verses also indicate that Swach Kral perceives the spiritual relationship between the 'Infinite' and the 'Finite' and has a grasp of the two concepts we are familiar with today : 'macrocosm' and 'microcosm'.

Swach Kral's poems are seen to contain un mistakable clues to his knowledge of the Mystic Way (and of its various stages). We gather from them that he is not merely aware of the crucial concepts connected with the spiritual path but also unfolds his own experience of the Divine through appropriate images and symbols. These verses from the poem 'रो'म्ब्लस क्या वुछ' (What I saw of the 'beautiful one') ae given as illustrative examples :

यी मे' वुछाम ती छुम दिलस,
रो'म्ब्लस क्या वुछि बुॅये।
गो'फि पनने चायोस चिलस,
छे'पि छेपिरुॅय मे' गिदुंमये।
गो'फ गॉमुॅच मीलिथ कुलस
रो'म्बलस क्या वुछि बुॅये।

What I saw of the 'beautiful' one
Has captivated my heart,

What more remains there for me to see ?
I went into my heart cave
To meditate long,
I played hide and seek with the beloved,
The cave got absorbed into the whole,
What more remains there for me
To see of the 'beautiful' one ?

पीरुॅ म्वरवुॅ वाच़ोस असलस,
सीर बोवनम म्वये म्वये।
दूर स्वछ क्राल वन्य कोरपिलस,
रो'म्बलस क्या वुछि बुॅये।।

To get to the Real, I approached the Peer,
He revealed to me the Secret in fine detail,
Yet Swach Kral is far from the goal,
What more is there for me
To note of the 'beautiful' one ?

The poem titled 'बर नो थावनम' (I was charmed into self-forgetfulness) is an important piece that tells us of Swach Kral's sense of gratitude to his preceptor—in what significant ways he was initiated by him as a disciple and what spirituality involves as a process. He stress that the aspirant has to cultivate the spirit of self-surrender and depend solely on the Guru's grace. Here are some verses from the poem that deserve our attention :-

ललुॅवान ललुॅवान ज्वलुॅ यान्य पावन,
खबर नो थॉवनम कें ह।
पीरन तॉल्यबस कथ ये'लि बॉवन,
सीरस सूॅत्य लो'ग यीरुॅने।
पननिस मतलबस प्यठ वातुॅनावन,
खबर नो थॉवनम कें ह।।

I was charmed into self-forgetfuless,
Lulled to sleep as caressed and fondled;
When the initiate receives the secret word from the teacher,
He feels overwhelmed.

मनुॅनिशि मन्सूर ल्वलि ललुॅनावन,
अन ये'लि पो'म्न लो'ग वुडने।
गालन तुॅ अथ दारस लहुॅ नावन,

हम ह्यथ दॅरियावुॅय श्रो'परावन।
दॅर्ययाफ्त ये'म्य को'रुय सुय ज़ाने,
ज़ोन स्वछि क्रालन व्यन्दुॅ ललुॅ नावन।
खबर नो थॉवनम केंह.........

As Mansur turned inward in loving devotion,
He chanted 'I'm Truth' and soared high;
He had to face taunts,
And embraced death at the gallows;
The aspirant holds his breath
In order to indraw the whole 'river',
He really knows who explores the truth;
Swach Kral attained knowledge
Through sustained loving devotion;
I was charmed into self-forgetfulness.

We come finally to the poem **बद** (O my vicious self) which is reflective in nature and melancholy in tone, conveying Swach Kral's sense of futility of life—a feeling of wastefulness over having failed to live a purposeful life, one that has remained devoid of any spiritual fulfilment. There is correspondingly a strong urge in the poet to engage himself fruitfully in what is spiritually worth while :

बदकार पानो खो'दराह द्राखो
चे' ना यादरुदुय केंह
तावन छु दुनिया योरक्याज़ि आखो,
चे नायाद रुदुय केंह

O my vicious self, you've followed
Your own inclinations,
Forgetful of what you were bidden to do;
This world is a sorrowful place,
Why did you come here at all ?

SECTION - IV

The sage embraces the one,
and becomes a pattern to all under heaven.
He does not make a show of himself,
Hence he becomes known;
Does not boast of his ability,
Hence he gets credit,
Does not brandish his success,
Hence he endures;
Does not compete with anyone,
Hence no one can compete with him;
Indeed the ancient saying:
'Bend and you will remain whole' is no idle word.
Nay, if you have really attained wholeness,
Everything will flock to you.

– Lao Tzu.

CHAPTER 12

A HOMAGE TO SAINTS AND SAGES OF KASHMIR, AND THEIR ROLE IN PRESENT WORLD ORDER

—PROF. S. BHATT*

KASHMIRI SOCIETY : A SAINTLY SOCIETY

A saint means a holy man, a spiritual being who is unselfish and loves all of mankind. A sage is a profoundly wise man who also uses his wisdom for the good of people world over. Therefore, historically saints and sages haves promoted harmony and peace in world society.

Kashmir has produced a large number of outstanding saints and sages who have left their mark on the history of Kashmir and on its cultural heritage. Seldom do we come across in the history of any part of globe such distinguished saints as in Kashmir. The history of Kashmir is often a history of its saints and sages who provided the culture and life style to its people. Saint poetess like Lal Ded of 14th century has singly given to the people of Kashmir a composite culture. Kashmiri language and poetry, and a multi-religious society. Her spiritual message given in the form of her verses or vaaks is remembered by the people to this day. A leading Kashmiri poet and writer Akhtar Mohi-ud-din (1928–2001) brings up in his book published in 1995. *A French Approach to the History of Kashmir,* the following verse of Lal Ded, the legendary poetess and seer of Kashmir.

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> In time past, we were,
> In time future, we shall be.
> Throughout the ages, we have been

Lal Ded thus shaped Kashmiriat, the cultural heritage of Kashmir. She has inspired all creative people of Kashmir. She has left a legacy of common brotherhood which cannot be wiped out from history. She gave Kashmiri language to the people, as a perennial source of guidance. Akhtar Mohiuddin says, quoting Amin Kamil, the poet:

> With the Kashmiri (language)
> we are Kashmiri (nation)
> or else disorderly crows in the wilderness.

The study of Kashmiri language is therefore being revived in recent times in Kashmir. Language will provide to people the wisdom and direction contained in it. Kashmiri language, Akhtar Mohiuddin says, has been preserved by our ancestors for thousands of years.

Kashmiri Society Today

This seminar by Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS) is a historic one. Its deliberations on saints and sages of Kashmir will be read with interest by millions when the proceedings are published. People are looking forward to the time when Kashmir will be freed from the militancy and terror imposed on the people of Kashmir from forces operating from across its borders. Kashmiris are waiting to live in peace and tranquillity. All the communities are desperate to rediscover their cultural life. The majority Muslim community cannot live peacefully and make economic progress. Professor Rahman Rahi said recently in the documentary prepared by Mr. M. K. Raina that the majority community and the people of Kashmir in general are unable to shape their lives due to uncertainty and lawlessness. The Kashmiri Pandits of the minority community of Kashmir have lost their homes. They are uprooted and driven by militants to leave the valley for all parts of India in refugee camps. Many Kashmiri Pandits have been killed in cold blood. The killings of 24 Pandits on 24 March, 2003 at Nadimarg was one such ghastly act of genocide.

How shall we bring order and happiness in a violent society in Kashmir? How shall Kashmiri Pandits return to live again in their homes in villages of Kashmir and in the mohallas of Srinagar? A great tragedy has befallen all Kashmiris. Militancy has left Kashmiris in the most unfortunate circumstances. Their society is almost disintegrated, and the composite culture thrown away to winds.

Role of Writers and Saints

In these troubled times, Kashmiris look to the wisdom of saints and sages for guidance. Recent global events have also cast shadows in many parts of world, including Kashmir. Terrorist attacks on Trade Centre in New York city in 2001. The Iraqi war which began in March 2003 between the United States coalition forces and Iraqi forces, are symptoms of global violence and terrorism. It is hoped that in this age of enlightenment and excellence sainty will prevail. Iraq war may end sooner than expected. Global terrorism will be curbed by the united will of all the governments and peoples of the world.

Kashmiris will look to the voice of its saints and sages to restore harmony. In recent months people have shown their profound love and respect for the composite culture of Kashmir. They have shown their urge for freedom from violence. The elections held in Kashmir in the year 2002 gave the opportunity for the people to restore their normal life. The international community will in due course exercise restraint on forces operating from outside Kashmir creating terrorism in Kashmir. Besides, India is equally determined to oppose these outside forces of terrorism that create lawlessness in the valley.

At this stage in the history of Kashmir, people remember Kashmiri sages and saints who have provided ideas and wisdom for progress for Kashmiris. These seers include poets, seers and thinkers like Lal Ded, Noor Din Arnimal, Permanand, Master Zinda Kaul, Professor Jayalal Kaul, Swami Lakhmanjee, Bhagwan Gopinath, Nitya Nand Shastri, Dr. Karan Singh, and others. They have shown light for peace and progress.

Merits of Kashmiri Heritage in Modern World

Kashmiri philosophy abounds in multi-cultural and secular life. This philosophy meets with the ideals of a secular India. A creative philosophy of multi-culturalism is supported by the modern ideas of science, and the environment movement of our times. New science philosophy now integrates all knowledge and is not deterministic, but flexible and relative, and provides bridges of understanding. The UNESCO held a symposium on this subject of science and synthesis to help a new unified view of science (proceedings published in New York, 1971). The global environment movement was started in 1972 by the UN Declaration on Environment. It is based on the nature's unity in diversity. The diversity of ecological systems is contained within the unified ecology of the planet. The cultural heritage of Kashmir is therefore based on the unity in diversity of its social life.

Thus Kashmiri heritage rejects fundamentalism of all sorts. It supports a spiritual life based on peace and harmony. It provides partnership with nature. The global environment movement is also helpful for a multi-cultural, multi-religious life. The environment crisis has brought forth a large number of ideas and actions for the protection of environment. People of Kashmir are keen to immediately look after their environmental problems. These problems include the diminishing forests wealth, water shortages, shrinking Dal Lake and Wular Lake, and degradation of land areas. Besides, we need to control population and control rapid growth of towns with adverse impact on the ecology of Kashmir valley. Pollution of air and waters poses major problems for the people in the valley. Planning for environments and sustainable development is the utmost concern of the people of Kashmir.

Kashmiris know the merits of all communities living together in peace and love. After all what are the main features that makes Kashmiriat: Kashmiri language, multi-cultural heritage, respect for all religions, mutual love and brotherhood of mankind. The saints and sages have been reviving above principles of Kashmiriat from time to time . It is most opportune that we recall today this historic wisdom of our saints and sages. We shall overcome terrorism. We shall gain peace and enlightenment. Our leading poets and scholars have provided the charter of progress and life style for Kashmiri society. The centers of education and excellence like KECSS should also be centers to bring out the excellence of Kashmiri saints and sages. This excellence should be spread to the national and global society. Kashmiris need to explain to people in all parts of globe the heritage of Kashmir based on Kashmiriat. The success of above endeavours shall make the people of Kashmir happy and prosperous. People shall live in eternal peace and harmony. They can attain global knowledge in science and humanities. Kashmir has been a great center of learning in history. Despite many problems, let the people overcome this sad part of history with hope and enlightenment. That is the message from the saints and sages of Kashmir for the present world order. The glorious heritage of Kashmir cannot be held hostage to the militant forces for long. Peace has to shine after brief periods of turmoil in history, according to the celebrated British historian Arnold Toynbee. Kashmiri Pandits who are suffering extinction today have had a role in history. Look what Jawaharlal Nehru did to transform the world order by non-alignment. Such forces have not disappeared, but are lying dormant. At the national level, Kashmiri Pandits have brought excellence and harmony everywhere, including Kashmir. They are the descendants of saints and sages. One may read the tributes paid to Kashmiri Pandits from eminent Muslim scholars of Kashmir like Professor Rahman Rahi, Mr. Akhtar Mohiuddin and others. One may read Walter Lawrence's book *The Valley of Kashmir* published in 1895 to discover the common stock to which Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir belong. The excellence of Kashmiri Pandits is brought out also by a saint writer Anand Kaul in his book *The Kashmiri Pandit* (1924). Let us therefore pay our homage today to these traditions of Kashmir and to the exciting historic role of Kashmiri Pandits and all saints and sages of Kashmir. Only time will show that Kashmiris can move once again towards progress and exciting future.

CHAPTER 13

SWAMI NANDLAL—THE CLAIRVOYANT

—J.N. BHAT

Swami Nandlal, who was endearingly called Nandabab, strode the spiritual scene of Kashmir for well over 50 years till he received Mukthi on October 30, 1973. Nandabab had acquired a clairvoyance which could not only read the present and the past, but could even predict events to come. To all appearances he behaved like a man out of his wits, quaintly dressed and muttering incoherently which made no sense for those uninitiated in his ways. But every word that he uttered was pregnant with deep meaning and was of great consequence for those who sought his blessings. If he chose he would relieve the faithful who sought his protection from the mundane trials and tribulations that momentarily afflict every individual and disturb his or her equilibrium.

Great Seer

Swami Nandlal was one in the line of great seers which the valley of Kashmir has produced over the centuries. Originally coming from village Nunar near Ganderbal, he rarely stayed in his house, although a new one was constructed for him by his devotees.

Wherever Nandabab lived, he would be mobbed by people of all faiths right from dawn to midnight to seek blessings. Even people from foreign lands would go to him. He would seldom talk directly to any person present in the audience. He would address one person whereas it was a reply to the unrevealed personal queries in the mind of another person also present there. He would talk in parables, similies, paradoxes, metaphors; sometimes he laughed, sometimes sang, but generally he would be dictating something or the other to anyone present on chits or in a register kept for this purpose. The writings on these chits or in the register would usually be replies to the mental queries and problems of the different members of the audience or other matters of general public importance, but all these were in metaphorical language.

Indifferent to Diet

About his cleanness. Nandabab would be very particular. He would bathe every morning, comb his hair and sometimes apply oils also. But he was totally indifferent to diet, which would generally be light. It did not matter whether you offered him varieties of meat or other dainty preparations or just one vegetable. He would take a little from the preparations presented to him, leaving the rest to be distributed amongst the audience. He usually had a small Katori with vermillion (Sindoor) which he would paste on the foreheads of people present, irrespective of their faith or origin. But he would never offer any food from his Thali, or affix the holy mark on anybody whom he intuitively felt would not like it. Once a Muslim friend persuaded me to accompany him to the saint for getting something done through his miraculous powers. When the saint began to offer the left-overs from the food of his Thali to people assembled there, my friend whispered to me that he would not like to take it. Curiously enough, Nandabab did not call him at all to have one. On another occasion, another Muslim friend whom I carried to the saint to get a complicated problem of his solved (which was, of course, solved exactly on the date that Nandabab predicted) requested me that the Tilak may not be applied on his forehead. While asking all the members of the audience to get the holy mark affixed on their foreheads Nandabab did not call him.

In the hierarchy of Siddhis a stage comes when a spiritual aspirant gets a vision of the universe and through his mind's eye sees the past, present and even the future with perfect accuracy. At this stage, it is said that the spiritual aspirant is all powerful; he cannot only foresee things but can also mould the course of events. Accomplished saints seldom take recourse to this display of power. According to them, Nature must have its own course and they would not interfere with the same, so much so that, even being all powerful, they themselves suffer from ordinary human ailments, diseases, etc. which they could easily get rid of.

Siddhi

Nandabab also had passed that stage or Siddhi of spiritual evolution when a seer acquires the power of clairvoyance. He could enumerate problems and make prophesies—personal, social and political—with accurate precision. Suffice it to say that he could read the mind of people around him and understand their problems; sometimes offer solutions also. But he would take particular care of those whom he considered to be his main devotees or, in his own words, who were under his banner (Alam).

Nandabab could and did predict the rise and fall of various governments. As another mystic of Kashmir, had told me, Nandabab was in the spiritual field 'the defence minister' of Kashmir with a whole host of other mystics, unknown and unidentifiable, working under him on different grades and posts. Later on, his jurisdiction extended to India also. I shall mention only two or three instances which, apparently unbelievable, are nonetheless true.

In 1965, when Pakistan invaded Kashmir, Nandabab was staying in the house of one of his disciples, the late Pt. Balkak Dhar. He started burning a huge fire and kept awake the whole night, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying. In the morning. I met him and he said that the previous night was the most difficult one for him. "They wanted to invade the airport", he said, "and I had to fight hard for changing their route". What transpired later was that actually Pakistani raiders had made all attempts during the previous night to capture the airfield but had failed. When a sabre-jet of Pakistan flew over Srinagar, he was performing a Havan; people felt panicky but he reprimanded them and assured that nothing would happen. When he was pressed further by queries he got a little irritated and said, "I have told you; should I give you in writing on a stamp paper ?"

Unpredictable

Nandabab's movements would be unpredictable. He would leave his residence usually in a car or taxi (sometimes in a tonga also) and direct the driver to carry him to one place or the other. This trip would continue for days and cover various cities and stations. Once in Jammu he took a taxi for Delhi. On the way, the petrol tank of the taxi became dry and it stopped. Nandabab asked the driver why he had stopped the vehicle. The driver informed him that the taxi had run out of petrol. The reply was if he had any water, he should pour it into the petrol tank. The poor driver, more out of awe for the saint, poured water into the tank. The taxi started straightaway. It reached Delhi without any petrol in its rank. This incident was narrated to me by the taxi driver himself.

From Delhi, Nandabab took a train to Bombay. There he directed his host to carry him to Santa Cruz Airport. When he reached the airport, a plane had taken off carrying Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, to some foreign country. A bomb scare was spread and the plane returned to the airport. Mrs. Gandhi took a different plane and continued her journey. Nandabab told his companions that he was very much worried till the plane took off and his task was over—nothing more nothing less. He returned to his headquarters and then back to Kashmir.

Basic Principle

All religions preach the same basic principle : that the ultimate goal is God or self-realisation. True saints have always had this universal approach. Nandabab also had the same universal approach; to him all the people, from any part of the world, were the same. He would show no preference for the high-ups nor would he treat common people with less consideration. He was always smiling and never in a pensive mood. He was living in a real world of omniscience and spiritual ecstasy which is far above the physical world, as Pt. Gopi Krishna has put it:

"The mystic gains a new power of perception which persists even in dream. In every state of being—eating, drinking, talking, working, laughing, grieving, walking or sleeping—he dwells in a rapturous world of light. He is always conscious of his luminous glow not only in his interior, but pervading the whole field of his vision during the hours of his wakefulness. He lives in a world of light and burning in his interior, filling him with a new lustre so beautiful and so ravishing. Light, both within and without, and a distinct music in his ears, are the two prominent features of his transformed being".

In this state did live this Godman, Nandabab.

Multiple Personality

Nandabab had a double or multiple personality. With his nearest disciples, his behaviour usually was that of a normal human being; he would talk about their personal matters, advise them on their family affairs and listen to them with patience and affection. But otherwise he would appear to be in his superworld, he would not reply straight to a question or a request. A distant relation of mine, a government servant, was involved in a crimindal case. He came to me a number of times so that I would speak to the Subordinate Judicial Officer seized of the case. I was a Judge of the High Court then. I would not do it. One day when Nandabab was at my residence, the gentleman came and became a part of the audience. I narrated his problem to Babjee and added that though he (Bab) was kind to me. I had never asked him for anything personal. I craved his favour to help the man. No reply. I repeated the request a second time and a third too, yet not a word in reply, nor did he care to look at the supplicant. But a fortnight later the accused was acquitted, much against all calculations and expectations.

But Nandabab was very particular that those whom he regarded as his own or, in his words, who were under his banner (Alam) should not take shelter under any other spiritual leader. He was jealous of them and would see that his flock remained intact. With all this, whole mankind was his family. In his madness there was a method, in his, ramblings was deep philosophy, in his wanderings the discharge of his political responsibilities, in his reveries and prayers the solicitude of the needy, the diseased and his devotees. He was celestial, he was benevolent, he was magnanimous and above all he was universal.

No Trumpeters

In this short article justice could not be done to the part played by this seer in the lives of all who approached him for solace. Details about his work, his youth, his profession, etc. are not available with me. It is for his devotees to collect the material for his biography for the benefit of posterity. He had no trumpeteers as other saints or seers have had. He belonged to a small place which was generally cut off 'from the rest of the world till recently and, hence, he could not gain, that publicity. In Gray's words, he was a "flower who was born to blush unseen and waste his fragrance on the desert air".

(courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 14

SHAKTINANDAN KARMAYOGI – PARAMASWAMI NANDLAL JI SAHIB

—MOTI LAL BHATT 'SHAFAQ BHARATI'

With the initial spontaneous reaction of the human mind to the wonder and awe of existence and its first outpourings in response to the gentle call of the Nature, while the inquiring persons adopted and followed the path of physical science, the thinking all-time greats did not stop at the mundane level. They ceaselessly endeavoured and trod further and further to the furthest end on the hard path of mental search, as they could, in no case, digest the idea of nothingness behind and beyond the physical aspect of existence. Not disputing, in a sense, existence of physical universe being a 'truth', they did not accept this 'truth' being the 'ultimate truth'. Their refusal was not for nothing. It had a cogent basis.

THE WONDER AND AWE OF EXISTENCE

Wherever and whenever we see and experience law, order and arrangement, we immediately conclude that there must be an intelligent being behind it. We experience it in our everyday life. When we see a house where household goods are in a state of chaos and confusion prevails, we say no intelligent person has been living here. On the other hand, where placements are orderly everywhere in the house and a nice arrangement exists, we think of intelligent master of the house. This being the case, when we look up and into this world—world of the Planet Earth—from our nearest surroundings to the farthest end, we are wonder struck by the order that systematises, the arrangement that works incessantly, throughout and at every level, with unerring precision, covering the entire gamut of living and non-living, sentient and insentient bodies; from a unicellular micro organism to a giant of an animal, from a droplet of water to a water-body of oceanic stature, from a speak of dust to the highest of the high hills; everything regulated by eternal laws. And, then there is the principle of syntropy, as opposed to entropy, which works on all matter. Under its influence, matter tends to reach higher and still higher levels of organisation with matching order and harmony. The evolution of life on earth is the outcome of this principle of syntropy in matter with human brain, as the finished product, so far being the most marvellous organisation. By entropy all organised forms of matter tend to disintegrate into lower and still lower levels of organisation and finally into their primal constituents. These are the two eternal paths of evolution and devolution on which all matter incessantly moves up and down mostly as a silent activity of inconceivable magnitude following the sublime plan and purpose of existence on and of the planet of Earth.

As the fifth largest planet in the Solar system and the third from the Sun, its position relative to the Sun is such that the overall surface temperature is neither too hot nor too cold for life to exist upon it, and its mass and gravity are of the right size to provide a layer of atmosphere, which screens out harmful solar radiation. Even this Earth with its huge structure and mass of 5.98×10^{24} kg., distanced about 15 crore kilometres at mean point from the Sun, is dwarfed by the vastness of the Solar system in which Pluto, as the outermost planet, has the farthest distance of 751 crore 60 lakh kilometres from the Sun with orbital period of 248 Earth-years.

Even this vast expanse of the Solar system lies just in a remote part of the Milky Way, *akashganga,* appearing not more than a pin-point in dimension. According to scientists, the Milky Way is a very huge celestial body, a galaxy, with the estimated diameter of about a 100 thousand light years i.e. 8.76×10^{17} kilometres, and contains as many as about 10 billion stars. Even this is not stationery. It rotates round its own axis passing through its centre. There are billions of such galaxies, which form foundation blocks of the universe and are bound together by their mutual gravitational interaction.

From a sub atomic particle to the biggest of the galaxies, the Universe with billions of galaxies, stars, planets, satellites, asteroids, quasars, meteoroids and other interplanetary material, partly visible and partly invisible is magnitudinous, wondreous, mysterious, awe inspiring, incomprehensible, inconceivable and all-powerful.

Modern scientists are convinced that the source of all the basic elements of Earth, and whatever animate and inanimate bodies exist on it, is the Sun. Most of the animal life drews energy from vegetation, which in turn derives energy from the Sun through the process of photosynthesis. From microbes to the huge living creatures that existed or exist, the entire cycle of life and all other phenomena which take place on Earth are caused and sustained by the Sun. It establishes a direct relationship between the Earth and the Sun and other members of the Solar family. Upon landing on the Moon, touching the Martian surface and on receiving feed back from successful 'fly-by' of spacecrafts moving close to the Venus etc. this fact of inter connectedness is further strengthened by the results drawn from extensive study of the data collected through these manned and unmanned explorations and discoveries made by interplanetory probes. The Solar System being a part of the Milky Way and the Milky Way being one of the building blocks of the Universe, imparts further continuity to this relationship of the Earth and the man on it with the universe and finally with the ultimate origin.

The Causeless Cause : Behind and Beyond

When we think of such a Universe full of activities - creative, preservative and destructive—we immediately come to the conclusion of 'something' as the ultimate truth being behind it. The all-time great thinkers of yore, in their own ways, visualised that 'something' which they thought should be the causeless cause of all existence permeating it as its substratum. Word by word, page by page, they scanned the book within and without. Channellising all their energies, physical and mental, and using the physical aspect as a crucible for brewing the chain of their ideas about that 'something' and further employing their psychic apparatus as the distillation equipment, they distilled and redistilled their ideas for the ultimate distillate, clear and pure. This clear and pure distillate reflected in them, beyond any shadow of doubt, the presence of the Supreme Intelligent. Being as the fountain head of all existence. Their supersensual experiments and experiences unveiled for them the inner individual self and its divinity; unravelled the mysteries of life, its true nature here and hereafter; unfolded the intrinsic relationship of man with this world and the cosmos, of the individual self with the Cosmic Self; elucidated unity behind plurality of things; showed the path to the goal of self-realisation; systematised the ways of a reunion and re-corporation with the Divinity. Thus their experiences and inferences gave to the mankind a philosophy, which bridges the gulf between the known and the unknown and explains why, how and wherefore of Srishti.

The Philosophy of Incarnation

The impediments of human beings are not voluntary. *Prakrti* drives them as bound souls and they are born again and again to work out their Karma. The Lord of the Universe also assumes embodiment, but in his case it is through his own free will. He being in control of *Prakrti*. Here by 'free well' is meant Lord's *Yogamaya shakti,* which he manipulates and the unborn Lord' puts on the appearance of being born and of growing. That is incarnation, *avtara.* Himself being supremely above *Karma,* it is the collective *Karma* of the human society as it ought to be, that gets itself embodied in the Incarnation.

Everything in nature has its time to appear. The Incarnation of God also comes under this law in any way. The Divine comes down to the earthly plane to work on the side of righteousness, to re-establish right when wrong prevails, to conquer adharma with dharma, falsehood with truth, age after age.

In between it is the emancipated pious souls as savants, seers, sages and saints who, as the chosen men of God, as His accredited ambassadors, successfully endeavour to teach and preach love and mercy which are ultimately more powerful than hatred and cruelty. *Rajas* and *Tamas* aggravate *adharma.* It threatens to topple down the social fabric. As godmen they induce *Sattva*, the chief and foremost of the three *Gunas* into society. With that *dharma* begins to thrive for social order to work on right lines. They lead humankind from darkness to light and from light to more light. At times they do not even hesitate to use their spiritual powers as divine weapons to annihilate the wicked, in their own mysterious ways, when and where preaching and persuasion fails. This they do to serve the divine purpose of existence at their level as a part of the divine design.

With paradisiacal attributes as the background and invigorating freshness, peaceful calm, harmony and rhythm of creation as the foundation, Kashmir, as *Reshvair,* (Garden of sages) over the ages served as the cosmic womb for the great souls to manifest themselves in human form as godmen. They evolved as spiritual giants on earth for doing good to humankind by shaping human mind in the righteous direction.

Nandbab Puts in His Appearance

Shaktinandan Karamayogi Parama Swami Nandlalji Sahib was one of those great saints of Kashmir. He appeared as a youth on the spiritual scene of Kashmir and strode it for over 50 years like a gentle colossus, leaving behind indelible imprints on the paths he trod, places he visited, the people who followed him and those and joined his spiritual congregations. For his humane qualities of head and heart, he was popularly known by the homely name of "Nandab". That was the profundity of the fervour of reverence which people across Kashmir had for him.

Dressed in a strange manner as he always used to be, Nandbab did not seem from his outward appearance to the uninitiated what he in reality was to the initiated. For oddity of his dress, long rubber shoes for footwear, sola hat for headgear, thick broad waist-brand with *khurpi* tucked in, number of sacred threads. *Janeyu'* visible from outside, *Hanumani sindoor* mark *tilak* on forehead, long and strong staff in one hand and a bundle of papers in another with the pen over his ear for issuing chits *parwanas* to people, walking quite fast, taking long strides, looking in different directions with a stern face and making surprisingly unusual gestures and gesticulations, many on-lookers would, out of sheer ignorance, laugh at him and call him *Nandamot*. They took him casually. They could not see the divine in him behind his outward appearance and behaviour.

I had some ordained opportunities, as it seems, of personal encounters and experiences with Nandbab, whenever my wife Smt. Rita Bhatt and I together visited Kashmir from Delhi during his life time. Everytime every sitting, at the feet of this benevolent *nishkamkarmi*, in the orb of his spiritual splendour, was an enriching experience, a special advantage, a matter of immense pleasure, as my mind would think only of things sublime. His words, his gestures were electrifying. He was a very powerful energiser. I can not explain why and how of it. But that is what it was like. With every sitting, I was inexpressibly, inevitably drawn towards him. My wife was already his devotee with unswerving devotion from the very early part of her life. That had a background.

With a view to supplementing my experiences with this blazing Sun of spirituality, I had to make strenuous efforts, spend considerable time collecting valuable material, as eye-witness account, from different reliable sources including a good number of his close devotees. The exercise was gainful, as on sifting the material collected I could draw a pen-portrait of the great SAHIB.

Gurumata's Prophecy

In the course of this exercise, many years back, my wife had once narrated to me, during her lifetime, that prior to her departure from the scene of this world, Swamini Smt. Sati Mataji of Karafalli Mohalla, Srinagar, Kashmir, had talked to some of her very near disciples and prophesied, while consoling them, that they need not worry in her absence as SAHIB would appear as a shining star on the spiritual firmament of Kashmir to take care of matters temporal and spiritual. Nobody had then knowledge of the person, 'Smt. Sati Mataji had named as SAHIB, who would come to fill the void. Exactly the same thing had happened. The prophetic words of the Swamini had come true.

On her *nirvana,* Swamini's place had become an *ashram* for her devotees and disciples. They had gathered in large numbers. The whole place was humming with activity connected with the 10th day *shradh-karma* of the departed. Suddenly, a young man joined the gathering. He took his seat in a corner of a sitting room. As he was not a known face, people around did not interact with him. What drew attention was his unusual outward appearance, his queer looks. However, he was offered 'prasad', milk, fruit and other items which were being served to all who came. My father-in-law Pandit Maheshwar Nath Razdan (Mahnoori), a pious and devoutly religious person, was sitting in the same room. He had full knowledge of Swamini's prophecy. Further, while narrating to me, from time to time, many things about various aspects of the height of Nandbab's spiritual personality, based partly on her own experiences and partly on what she had learnt from her parents, brothers and sisters, my wife had once told me that Smt. Sati Mataji had, following her prophecy, told her father — "When SAHIB comes, you will take him to your home."

Pandit Maheshwar Nathji remembered the command. In fact, he had been, all the time, waiting for the arrival of SAHIB. He had confided it to his wife Smt. Veshmali, who was a saintly householder. SAHIB had already arrived and he was in the gathering sitting beside Pandit Maheshwa Nathji. The latter did not know that. As the 10th day rite proceedings rolled to closing moments, the stranger, the unknown man, had come closer to him and in very low voice confidently asked him : "*mei nyou panun garrah*". 'Take me to your home'. For a moment, he was taken by surprise. Of all the people, why did that man talk to him only about it ? He pondered over....

An unknown man who had not disclosed his identity and who with what all he looked like from his exterior, how could he be accommodated in a family order.

A few days later, one day Pandit Maheshwar Nathji was working, as usual, at the table in his office-room at ground floor of the then Shergarhi secretariat building of the days of Maharaja Hari Singhji. With the given position of the table, his back faced a window opening towards the main roadside. He heard a knock at the window. He turned round. To his astonishment, it was the same unknown man who had met him at Swamini Sati Mataji's *ashram.* He did not show any interest. The man outside knocked at the window again. Pandit Maheswar Nathji again looked back. This time, the man outside gave a serious look and said : "*Kath bozu, bai ha chhus SAHIB*" — 'Listen, I am SAHIB'.

Instantly, Pandit Maheshwar Nath ji rushed to meet SAHIB and pay obeisance to him. He took him to his home at Tankipora, Srinagar, in the most respectful manner. On reaching home, he quickly prepared a seat, 'aasana', at a proper place for SAHIB and solace as he came out of the room where SAHIB had been seated, he was called aside by his wife. "What is all this ? How did you even think of bringing this sort of man to our home ? We are a family with children," She told her husband with an ire, 'Cool down; I say cool down. He is not what you think him to be. He is SAHIB. He is the SAHIB about whom Swamini Sati Mataji had told me. Don't you remember ?" Pandit Maheshwar Nathji thus pacified his wife. Everything was set right.

With their mind being already staunch and steady in the pursuit of God and his established devotees, both Pandit Maheshwar Nathji and his wife Smt. Veshmaliji looked after SAHIB more like foster - parents with ever increasing attention and affection. Their children extended a helping hand. The whole house became the centre of spiritual activities from early morning to late evening on all days with little respite.

That was the time of SAHIB's shining forth, his opening out as a *mastana* of summit order. His flashing physical demeanour, his whimsies, changing moods, fluctuating temperament and all that were very hard to bear with for anyone being so near and so close. But, the family of Razdans', determined to follow the divine design, with firmness of their mind, did everything within their capacity to devotedly serve the emerging saint and seer.

Godward Pilgrim on Earth

The time ticked. Months after months, years after years rolled by. It was an eventful period of SAHIB's hectic activities directed towards his spiritual blooming. He was a Godward pilgrim on earth. The potentiality of the seed of spirituality in him, which had sprouted and grown to a tree, had become clear and obvious through his bounteous acts and salutary activities. He never remained devoid of sublime functions. He was ever up and doing somewhere, somehow or other, one or the other *sukarma* out of compassion for the multitude. He had no personal motives to serve, no mundane desires to foster. Without keeping an eye on the fruits of his actions, and living without the feeling of "I" and "mine" being the positive consequence of disappearance of ego, SAHIB had attained the state of unmodified superconsciousness bathed in bliss.

His refined feelings and clarified understanding were centred on Supercosmic Intelligence. Moral and spiritual laws are not different from the laws of nature had become more than lucid to this man of enlightenment. In fact, he had availed himself of these laws for his ethical and spiritual progress which he, in turn channellised for the good of mankind in the spirit of disinterested service as an evolved man of self-dedication. He had attuned his mind to truth.

Nandbab stayed with Razdans' for about two decades. It was a long period of day-to-day mutual performance of the divine act like flowing of the stream of bliss from *Bhagwan* and taking of dips in this stream by *bhaktas* with unswerving *shraddha*. Nandbab held the noble lady of the house of Razdans, Smt. Veshmaliji, in high esteem. He saw her as an embodiment of motherhood and addressed her as *Tankipara Mai* with deep respect.

From dayspring to dusk, this quick-walking, queer-looking great man of high spiritual attainments would move from street to street, locality to locality, area to area, even visit some shops and houses on the way, on sacred purposes known to him. As a clairvoyant he saw visions with the seership of the one higher up on the hierarchy of the spiritually accomplished. He made prophetic pronouncements talking in parables, similies, metaphors and through the language of gestures but generally writing or chits of paper his pithy words of predictions, prophesies in his — "addressing Paul what is intended for Peter" — "*tse kun valith mei kun*" — characteristic style of communication. It would either be replies to the mental unrevealed queries of individuals or reflect social or political events to follow. In these outdoor movements, he was usually accompanied by two of his disciples, who had totally dedicated themselves to him. One was a Kashmiri pandit Shri Baghwan Dass and the other a Muslim gentleman. They were his *sewaks*. The chits he wrote or dictated bore his seal, as a *farman*, a *hukumnama*. Many of these chits he would make over to the persons concerned. I know it for certain that many of his devotees, associates and disciples have still preserved these chits as their much valued possession.

From Man to Manliness to Godliness

With day-to-day all such and such like many other daytime divine doings of Nandbab, it was hard for one to believe oneself seeing him in late evening hours, at his resting place, as a changed man, a different picture of sainthood—innocently cool, comforting, counselling type of a companion. Usually, in divine moments of spiritual ecstasy, he would recite certain *shlokas*, in his melodiously sonorous voice, in praise and 'pooja' of Shri Shri Jagdamba Sharika Devi, to invoke her blessings for all. Here, some of these sacred *shlokas* are reproduced below.

अघोरव्याधिनाशी च सर्वदुःखविनाशिनी।
अष्टादशभुजा पायात्–शारिका श्यामसुन्दरी।।

शारिके शरण्ये त्वां मयि दासे कृपां कुरु।
ऋणं रोगं भयं शोकं रिपून्नाशय सत्त्वरम्।।

प्रद्युम्नशिखरासीनां मातृवक्त्रोपशोभिताम्।
पीठेश्वरीं शिलारूपां शारिकां प्रणमाम्यहम्।।

In those hours of soft and sweet temper of Nandbab, one would witness yet another calm aspect of his immense personality. He was fond of classical music. With a mystic smile on his well-chiselled face with sharp features, he would occasionally blissfully sing couplets of native *sufiana kalaam* and also himself play on a stringed musical instrument. Not only that. He did not hesitate to deliberate on important household and family matters of the host family and to render advices that would work and provide solace and satisfaction to all.

It is during these years, this phase of his spiritually meritorious life, that people from all sections of the society — high and low, destitute and affluent, victor and vanquished — were irresistibly drawn towards Nandbab as devotees, worshippers, admirers and associates. They came from all religions and regions. Being unnatural dividers, caste, creed and colour had no meaning for this great man of *atmabodha*, who had journeyed to the inner world and viewed the inmost realm of 'Atman'. The knowledge of the changeful multitude and of the imperishable changeless. Reality, the spiritual unity and solidarity of all existence, the One behind the many without a prior or posterior, had fully-blossomed in the Eden of his inner self. He was a universal man, a '*Vishwapurusha*', integrated within and without. Himself having risen from mortal to the immortal status of existence, Nandbab ever endeavoured to lead his devotees from the phenomenal world of appearances to the realm of Reality; from the darkness of unawareness to the light of awareness; from the lower nature '*apara prakriti' to* the higher Nature '*para prakrit.*'

While doing so, he did not lose sight of the meaning and importance of life in the world. The inviolable relationship between the Cosmic Reality and the individual soul was well known to him. He had an intelligent understanding of being a man first and then being a saint. It is true manliness which on fruitioin leads to godliness, was lucidly clear to this man of Supreme knowledge, *mahajnan,* and he boldly acted upon this unifying, all-embracing message of the Upanishads.

His being a Hindu, a Kashmiri pandit, a Sarswat brahmin, was confined to the mode of worship, penance and renunciation he had adopted and to his, true adherence to the eternal, *sanatan,* lessons he had taken from the sacred Hindu Scriptural Texts Universal based on infallible and inviolable natural laws. He had due regard and respect for other religions and mixed freely with their followers. In turn they revered him alike. They would often come to him to pay their obeisance. A very large number of Muslims, who joined his congregations, would bow in saluting him, inter alia, for his compassionate saintship, his inner most feelings for social harmony. They included elite of the community, leaders of the masses, highly placed government functionaries on one side and the indigent, destitutes and despondents on the other side, as from other communities. It was a sight to see how they treated Nandbab with absolute faith and veneration.

Nandbab the man of the epoch, the '*yugapurusha*', munificently showered his benevolence and poured forth his divine love in abundance to all those who devotedly gathered around him, yearning individually for his spiritually blissful *ashirwad* for their solace and protection from major trials and tribulations, crises and conflicts.

After his very long stay with Razdan's (Mahnoori) at Tankipora, Srinagar, Nandbab took leave, in his own mystic manner, from Tankipora Mai and left to attend to the tasks ahead. With that started the second phase of his spiritual life — more powerful, more hectic, more exuberant — and in its course he never stayed at a place for longer duration. Never again had he any sort of a home. Indefatigably he would move from place to place, region to region within the valley and outside. Many times he would also go outside the state. His movements were unpredictable. All of a sudden he would change the course of his journey, taking his companions by great surprise. It is not for nothing that he travelled long distances, with just brief breaks here and there. It was always on specific purposes, tasked for him, as it seemed, in the Nature's plan of action covering various aspects of life in social, economic and political fields in and outside the state of Jammu and Kashmir, that he would be on the go shaping situations, events at individual, community or country level, for common good, in his own subtle ways which inspired awe and wonder. That was Nandbab the 'Wonder saint' of Kashmir of twentieth century A.D.

Nandbab had a profound sense of observation. All that came his way did not go unnoticed by him. He would react in his own inimitable ways to what he saw. Abject poverty, despondency, destitution and deprivation invariably moved him. He would always express his deep concern for the suffering and work his way for their solace. His soothing words acted as elixir for them.

It is amazing that even before the Jammu and Kashmir Government had thought of working out the modalities of land-to-tiller policy pronounced after independence, Nandbab as *amicus humani generis,* a friend of humanity, had issued his commandment – a *hukumnama* – on chits of paper distributed then in hundreds, spelling out the *modus operandi* of distribution of land between the landlord and the tiller. The *hukumnama* read – '*yak hissa wa hardu hissa hawala*'. That was Nandbab's heart religion.

Sanskari Son of Sanskari Parents

As *Sanskari* son of pious parents Raj Guru Pt. Shankar Sahib and worshipful Smt. Subhadraji, Nandbab was born on 30th day of the month of December, 1896 AD, corresponding *Paush Krishna Paksh Dashmi* in the house of Sahibs' in mohalla Purushayar, Srinagar. Yet another star had appeared above the horizon to shine on the spiritual firmament of Kashmir issuing beams of light to guide people to self-realisation and make the human life a fulfilment for them.

In the atmosphere charged with religiousness in the house of Sahibs, Nandbab was as an infant and later on lovingly looked after and nurtured by his parents. Side by side, he received education while at Srinagar and attained proficiency in Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit. Years of love, care and pious preachings added much, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to his physical and mental development.

The sands kept flowing. Nandbab became an alert, agile, tall youngman of nerves of steel and sharp intellect, steadfastness and forbearance. Circumstances changed, situations took a new turn. According to Smt. Umaji Razdan, a very close devotee of Nandbab being the daughter of Razdan's (Mahnoori) of Tankipora, Srinagar, Sahibs' for some reason shifted from Purushyar mohalla, Habba Kadal, Srinagar, to Nunar village near Ganderbal en route Tullamulla, to live there. Nandbab's *mausi* – mother's sister – Smt. Yamberzal lived in this village. Nandbab's brother Pt. Shambhu Nath Sahib too resided in the same village.

Here, Nandbab would leave his bed much before the break of dawn and move out from his residence for worship of God, on the bank of a stream near the village, for a long time with his mind attuned to God. Everytime it would be preceded by a *homa* which he would perform at his home before moving out. It had become his daily routine. He did it as his obligatory duty, *nitya karma.* But, he did not stop at that. How could he ? The lamp of intense desire, burning full-flame in the mansion of his heart, to dedicate his self exclusively to spiritual life, illumined for him the path ahead.

God's Plans and Purposes : Pre-Programmed

It is said, and rightly so, that God' ways, His designs, are known to him alone. He works and also masters all activities under a definite plan, which he tailors for fulfilment of all that. He wills ever from manifestation to dissolution, covering all the process-stages from the beginning to the end. The plan of God is the same both in the macrocosm and the microcosm, and everything is bound by it. Man's free-will, beyond a certain limit, is a misnomer. It does not work. What works is what is predetermined a course of sequences in the overall state of existence, with every sequence leading naturally to every other sequence, in follow up, to complete the unique exercise of existence, from end to end, to serve the given purpose.

This thought is based, as it is and in all its aspects, on unfettered philosophical Reason as understood in Vedanta. It is a Reason which is complete. It is a Reason which does not contradict but fulfils logical and then the scientific reason. It goes beyond the 'known'. It goes to the 'knower', the 'experiencer', the 'self'. It reveals the unity of the within and the without of nature. With it we travel from lower to higher truth.

Away from the veritable warfare of mundane existence, those were the moments of quietude when one deliberates deeply, in the focus of philosophical reason, on human experiences with, matters gross and subtle; how, what and why of existence; dual and relative, non-dual and absolute; changeful and changeless; the unity of experience in the unity of immanent and the transcendental; the Impeirshable *Brahman,* the Supreme, as the substratum of the perishable panorama of the universe. Dr. Anupama Vasundhara Kak and I were discussing things as these that give significance and meaning to existence. In the course of discussion of this kind and on these subjects, it was natural to talk about events happening through the stages of existence as preordained, preprogrammed, in the Universe of name, form and action, of space-time, by the One beyond limitation, beyond time, space, casualty, the Eternal behind the ephemeral.

We talked. Given the cause and effect principle nothing happens by chance. There has to be a cause and only then will there be a happening as an effect. We call it a chance only when we do not know the cause. The divine designs and happenings are inevitable. Nothing can resist God's plans, His will and execution. He is the Life of lives. He is the cause of causes.

Dr. Kak cited an illustration in explanation from what the modern science of Ecology unfolds for us. I am tempted to quote this illustration in full for readers. That has a specific purpose to serve.

"A group of microorganisms found in water are a perfect example of the strategies living beings employ for survival under the most adverse conditions. During monsoon season puddles of water are formed. It has been observed that after 2-3 days, the puddles develop a light greenish colour due to the onset of algae or microscopic plants. After the fourth day, the development of this group of microorganism takes place. As the amount of water decreases due to increase in atmospheric temperature, the micro-organisms start reproducing fast. When the amount of water is really minimum the organisms start producing cyst or resting stages instead of living babies. These cysts remain in the soil and when the monsoon sets in the next season, these cysts open up to develop into living microorganisms."

This is how Nature pre-programmes situations to develop in sequence for their ultimate outcome as the event marked as manifestation of what is till then unmanifested body of activities planned to perform in the outer world. Extending the rational correlation of experience from a limited field of experience of physical world to the whole of experience of physical and the non-physical world, it would bring into focus foreordained induction of Nandbab in the State's police force as a forerunner of his destined role of policing at spiritual level in years ahead. That is the relevance I find in the illustration given to the events at deeper dimensions of the personality of Nadbab.

He was employed in the police department and served at various places as an upright and diligent official devoted to his duty. His postings took him to far-flung areas, as far as Ladhak which is one of the three provinces of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was his posting in the Central Jail, Srinagar, which ultimately showed up as the harbinger of flowering of the spiritual man in him. Situated at the foot of the Hariparbat hillock, which is the most sacred seat of gods and goddesses with age old temple of Mother Sharika atop, the Jail provided him ample opportunity not only to keep vigil but also to meditate during nights at the sanctum. It is said that Mother Sharika feeling pleased with his unswerving devotion blessed him with fruition of his spiritual longing. It was something like a flash which passed through his body and soul, illumining his whole being. Realization dawned on him. He was entirely a changed man. He gave up his job and took to sainthood. He never looked back to his home and hearth. That was round about the year 1930 A.D. Walking with long steps in his characteristic manner, he travelled incognito for some years from village to village, meadow to meadow, forest to forest, with fearless love of Truth, in quest of bliss to feel the marvellous touch of the soul and to get attuned to the supermundane. He worked hard for it ceaselessly and consciously. He penanced. He meditated for long durations with single-pointed concentration. The responses he received were rewarding. As he returned to the city of Srinagar, he was perfectly enriched. He had known the knowable. He had established what is expressed as the connexion between man and the Maker.

With the water of Vitasta flowing down the then seven bridges across this river in the city, Nandlal grew in stature as a saint, the area of his influence widened and he wielded his staff with the strength of the one firm in devotion to duty, *dharma*. He seemed to have been assigned the paramount seat of power, *shakti* as kinetic force by the whole host of contemporary saints. He manifested it as and when required. He had been accorded the epithet of 'Supreme commander of peace'. Developments of major significance including rise and fall of governments in J & K state, political and socio-political changes etc. were under the orb of his spiritual influence. It is incredible but true.

Mysticism and Modern Science

The voyage from the shore of unawareness of the ocean of existence to its another shore of complete awareness is, of course, mysterious, for it is the divine mysteries which get unravelled, sheath after sheath, as the man sails on. Wonder after wonder, amazement after amazement, touch the inner chords of the aspirant, when finally he finds himself in a state of oneness with the one. That is the state of beauty and bliss.

It is this personal experience of the ultimate the enlightened have addressed as mysticism. The man is mentally evolved. From the sense impressions and instinctual impulses, he moves to intuitive consciousness. It is an evolutionary ascent. All the constituents of life are fused in an harmonious whole. The mundane desires yield place to spiritual longing. The individual self merges with the Universal Self, with emotional love and devotion coupled with passion for prayer and worship as also austerity being the distinguishing marks. The basic truth of oneness of man and the Maker surfaces.

As the things stand, mystical trance, viewed through the glasses of modern science, is taken as something of a hallucinatory condition of the mind or as hypnosis. In these two conditions, it is artificial inducement from outside which creates the effect and as the 'effect' whatever is perceived has, if I am not wrong, not even the remotest possibility of association with the Divinity. That is what differentiates mysticism from the rest. It is a peak condition emerging, lifetime religious discipline, from super consciousness. Modern psychologists know of conscious, unconscious and what they call subconscious state of mind. Superconscious is beyond their ken, so is mystical ecstasy. Any attempt by them to touch, investigate and write about this state of consciousness and its effect will be an exercise in futility. The reason is simple. In the account given by the great yoga masters based on their personal experiences, they (psychologists) will find nothing familiar to them. With their background of present-day psychology, which it self is at sea about this level of consciousness, these psychologists will turn only to sub-conscious. That will not be meaningful.

Sometime back, I happened to watch an interesting programme on National Geographic channel on television. It was about 'out-of-body experiences' of some identified persons in the western world investigated by scientists and psychologists. It seems the process has received a kick-off in the west and hopefully the day may come when *yoga*, occultism, mystical ecstasy will receive recognition and become a subject of thorough study by experts; when extraordinary metaphysical formal statements. 'sutras' of Indian spiritual scientists, the highest philosophical systems given by Indian savants, the holy books like the Srimad Bhagwad Geeta, the Yoga Vasishtha and the great Shakti Shastra of Panchastavi which lucidly deals with the Seven levels of consciousness, called the Doctrine of Kundalini, from Muladhara to Brahmarandra, will be honoured as text books.

Paranormal psychologists have started appearing on the scene of investigation into higher regions of non-physical existence. Today there is one; tomorrow there will be many more. With preparation and planning for well-meaning exploration of dense mount of consciousness, they will one day rediscover higher and higher reaches of consciousness for themselves and others who ignore it as something meaningless. However, this will at best serve as a source of convincing but preliminary scientific information for modern man of scientific temper. Here most important thing one has to ever bear in mind about the higher planes of consciousness of stupendous nature is that journeying from end to end and then the crowing glory of the peak condition of the breath taking encounter with the framework of physical science. It has to be personally experienced as the great masters of ancient India have done it.

Mysticism is always a solo adventure and achievement. It is a holy flight of 'alone to the Alone'. It is the level of psyche at which consciousness is not even aware of its existence. It is a state of face-to-face holy meeting of experiencer and the experienced at the sunny heights of blissful joy of divine union. As an unbounded province, a limitless sphere, a free zone of divine doings with no inhibitions, no prohibitions, untouched by limitation of outer and inner, of the not-self and the self, of the many and the One, it is a region of all-embracing knowledge. It is a domain of total vision which gives strength to achieve life-efficiency, that is efficiency in external worldly life and efficiency in internal thought and contemplation.

But, when an aspirant takes great pleasure in his inside world, in the world 'beyond' and becomes other worldly in his attitudes, propensities and activities coupled with in attention towards the outer world around him of which he is the product, emphasis rather over-emphasis on individual salvation gets the lead in him. He becomes exclusively other-worldly mystic, ever centred in his divine self. He is like the one bodily isolated from the turmoil of the world and seated in solitude with one's mind earnestly turned Godward. His is a case of action in inaction, where action is spiritual disciplining for the quest of the Infinite, going on within; and inaction is doing nothing externally.

Nandbab : A Mystic, Mastana, Messiah

Nandbab was a mystic. But he was a mystic with a characteristic difference. Here was the enlightened, emancipated man who had attained spiritual heights through rigorous physical and mental exercises over a long period of time and established himself in *Anuttara* or Supreme Reality, which is the state in which the external objective existence is felt and seen as only an expression of the self-luminous Eternal Universal Unsurpassable Divine consciousness. That is the plane of *Bodha,* which is thought-free, *avikalpa* and *purva* as integral, undivided, unconditioned, undetermined, unlimited, not influenced by any external condition. At the same time, Nandbab was, as it seemed from his activities in the external world of names and forms as manifestation of his elevated inner self, credited with *Kaulika-siddhi* which means the achievement of unification of empirical consciousness with the Divine Universal consciousness in his very physical form. From undifferentiated, transcendental level to the differentiated, gross level and vice versa, his was the case like that of the ascent and descent of the four stages of *Vak* as *para, pashyanti, madhyama* and *vaikhari.* He was both microcosmic and macrocosmic spiritual personality perfectly harmonised. He was as much a man of this world as he was of that world. He was a solemn embodiment of the combination of the all-embracing knowledge supreme, *para-vidya,* and benevolent activity, *Kriya,* for the welfare of others in this world.

With these distinguishing attributes, Nandbab as a mystic belonged to 'MASTANA' School of mysticism. The other school being that of 'FARZANA'. In the spiritual evolution of a saint, a stage comes when the aspirant's supersense called the divine eye is developed and opened. It is not a freak nor an accident. It surfaces as an outcome of a perfectly disciplined pure life progressing with precision and certainty. According to the great teachers of Scriptures man completes his evolution with the acquisition of this divine insight. What man even with the human-contrived aids to sense-knowledge can not do and see, the saint, after getting established in spiritual excellence, subordinating his personal will to the Will of the Lord and the spiritual eye evolved, can see things in continuity of time past, present and future, for time has no barriers for him and also do extraordinary things.

The spiritual eminence of 'mastanas' gives them a command over nature, the five Great Elements, 'mahabhutas'. They are masters of situations, events and happenings and can do miracles without any limitation. That is what Nandbab was, what he commanded and what he did. The occuit powers he had developed in him had given him the 'shakti' to do anything limitlessly, to perform unimaginable things. He could even change the course of events at the individual level and national and international level too as and when required. His words, his thoughts, his deeds were selfless, always directed straight towards what would be good for the welfare of mankind. With his miraculous powers which he skilfully used on serious occasions threatening lives of masses, their security and safety, their future and the rest, with his clair voyance, he changed the course of events for betterment of all. And look! he did all that of his own. That was yet another differentiating feature of the spiritual life of this 'mastana' of Kashmir.

Not only that. It is said, and rightly so, that divine powers are usually attained in spiritual pursuit by very hard precept, practice and penance, rigorous self-control, meditation, 'dhyana', concentration, 'dharna', and absorption, 'samadhi', as creative contemplation in specific sense, for which the time factor extends to the duration of several births in succession. However, in very rare cases these powers can as well be bestowed upon a disciple in a trice by the spiritual guide, 'guru', of great spiritual excellence. But that makes a different story.

It is self-evident, therefore, as to how much momentous these powers divine should be for successful seekers as their hard self-earned spiritual asset, as it is these powers that give them the ability to predict, prophecy, grant boons and perform miracles. The display of this ability costs them, everytime they do so, in terms of expending from their spiritual asset.

'Farzanas' are very selective in their approach. They do not fritter away their divine powers, being very careful about their spiritual asset. It is seldom that they come forward to grant favours to the deserving seekers of help or to tackle situations facing the people. But Nandbab as a 'mastana' was a different make. He always gave precedence to helping people both at individual and collective level in hard times, in his own divine ways, least bothering, as it seemed, about his spiritual earnings which he willingly spent plentifully on other doing good to them.

The Spirit of Self Dedication

Every time he did so he was, in fact, performing a *mahayajna* in which he worshipfully served parts of his spiritual earning as the *havi.* I am more than convinced in the heart of my heart that on such sacred occasions, gods would have been showerings, from skies above, divine flowers of appreciation, *prashansa,* saying ; "Lo ! here is the ethically and spiritually a radiant personality who works for others in the spirit of self-dedication." The act of offering the best and the most useful in one for the welfare of the others is self-dedication. Can there be a better possession in this world than the best as divine powers ? Nay, is the reply. See the greatness of the man with manliness in him, Nandbab spent even the best of his possession in the service of mankind. He was, indeed, the saint of the people, for the people. Should that not place him on a higher (pedestal ?

Bestowed with discerning wisdom, *buddhi,* Nandbab had consciously channellised and directed all his activities towards adoration of God and serving his creation in the spirit of service to Him by offering the best in him, without strings, for the welfare of all. Assuming this righteous attitude in life, Nandbab had transformed *karma,* which is otherwise regarded as soul-bewildering, into soul-emancipating factor leading to all merit here and hereafter. This is what we should understand as being the soul of service aspect of life.

Swami Vivekananda says : "Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself." *(Complete Works, Vol. V.)*

The true meaning of service, *seva*, has already been given above in brief. Coming to the second ideal of renunciation, *tyaga*, we have it as the theme in a part of the very first verse of the Isha Upanishad

"*tena tyektena bhunjitha.........*"

which says : 'enjoy life through renunciation'. Here the two words 'enjoy' and 'renunciation' do not convey what is understood as their meaning in common parlance.

'Enjoy' in this sacred Upanishadic lesson stands not for taking joy in what the unbridled, grasping senses and the untrained mind seek at the material plane of existence and the being strains every nerve to acquire that what is perishable giving impermanent joy as a bubble on water. These sense-pleasures are always crowned with pain. Beings hug the one and shun the other and the process continues as one desire leads to another. The real joy springs from what is lasting.

Likewise, the true meaning of 'renunciation' has to be properly understood, and followed, to correct the wrong notion people generally have about it. For want of intimate knowledge and proper understanding, renunciation is being taken to mean keeping away from possession and pleasure, dissociating oneself from the living world, and retiring to remote places of solitude for 'sanyasa'.

But the Upanishadic concept based on philosophical reason has something different, something lively, which it unfolds in a convincing manner for human mind to absorb and assimilate. It is not meant for mere study, mental ornamentation, or intellectual exercise. It has to be understood, appreciated and followed in day-to-day life in this very world. Self-discipline is the key which opens the doors. The loftiness of ethical and spiritual personality of the man proceeds from the synthesis of all experience of the not-self, and the changeful, 'martyam' and the Self, the changeless reality; man and God; time and eternity. This synthesis will surface only by actively living fully in this world, performing all duties and function as a true man with a sense of detachment, directing all salutary '*karmas*' Godward as a *Karma yogi.* What essentially needs to be renounced is '*tamas*', *kama, krodha, lobha, moha* and *ahankar,* and not actions motivated not by any desire and performed as acts of service to others.

This wise, one gives expression to one's true Self, the Self that realises its oneness with all and gives itself away to all in love. Human situation is transformed into pattern of beauty and reaches the acme of joy. That is what is meant by 'enjoy life through renunciation'.

True to this Upanishadic teaching, Nandbab lived his life not as the earth-bound man but as the soul-liberating karma yogi up to the last moment of his earthly existence. He first attained Godhood and then pursued worldly things in service of mankind for their would be no anxieties of the mind to disturb him. He was a self-satisfied man.

Miracles and Marvels Galore

As a man of spiritual attainments, who had entered the domain that was divine and was established in yoga, Nandbab did hold to outward view his divine powers in masterly manner. But, he never did that for self-aggrandizement or to influence audience of his devotees, admirers and others. Also, he did not do that to earn any appreciation of gatherings of people around or to take them Godward. His ways of doing things were his own as he was complete by himself. He did perform miracles, make prophesies, only when warranted by compelling circumstances or when motivated by compassion for the deserving to rescue them from impending trouble he could know as a seer, but not at all for any personal purpose.

It was October 1947. Pakistan had invaded Kashmir. The enemy forces were advancing and organising their forward movement to besiege the city of Srinagar and capture the only airport a few kilometres from the city. It was a regular warfare. Invaders were mercilessly looting, brutally massacring innocent people, burning to ground properties, desecrating places of worship.

At that critical stage, the people of Srinagar, actively organised by the then only political party of Kashmir, showed courage and rose to the occasion to defend the city and surrounding areas against invasion. People's militia marched to offer resistance to the invaders.

While the enemy was preparing for a final assault on the city, Nandbab as the saint of the people, for the people, could not resist. How could he ? The situation was more than compelling for him to use his mystic powers for the welfare of Kashmir and its people. In the third-storey balcony of the house of Pt. Maheshwar Nath Razdan (Mahnoori) in Tankipora mohalla in Srinagar, where he was staying then, Nandbab stood up, with the seriousness and determination of a committed soldier, to act. He fixed pieces household firewood in different directions, symbolising artillery power, which he himself manoeuvred frequently changing their position and direction. He shouted. His shouts sounded like war cries. He roared. His roar was like the thunder of clouds. He swiftly moved hither and thither making strange gesticulations. Panic stricken onlookers, watching Nandbab in action, differently interpreted his movements according to their individual understanding.

Circumambulating the big fire, which he had in the courtyard of the same house, he looked furious beyond description. From here he went back to the balcony and sharply glanced around as if viewing distant objects from a gazebo. After a pause, he gazed skyward with a mysterious smile on his face and loudly uttered some typical words which for the understanding ones meant: "invasion thwarted.... invasion thwarted ....".

Immediately thereafter, it so happened that the Indian armed forces which were airlifted, sorties after sorties, landed in full strength on the Srinagar airport and launched a massive counter offensive swiftly pushing back the aggressor.

In 1965 Indo-Pak war, Nandbab repeated the miraculous feat. Standing firm as a rock, under the still more catastrophic conditions, he once again provided impenetrable umbrella of protection to the people of Kashmir.

That time Nandbab was putting up in the house of a devotee at Deewan Bagh in Srinagar. One day he started showing signs of alarm. His close devotees present asked him about the immediate cause of his extra-anxiety. He did not say that. Instead he asked them in a commanding tone to light instantly a holy fire in the courtyard and to prepare oblational food which he wanted them to keep ready by a certain hour of afternoon of the next day. The devotees followed the command. The holy fire was lit then and there and preparatory work for the oblational food was started same day.

Next day, as the word spread a large number of devotees thronged the place with their offerings. These offerings were consigned to the holy fire as and when brought. As the indicated hour approached, two platefuls of the oblational food were placed before Nandbab. One of the plates he kept for himself and the other one he asked a devotee to consign to the holy fire, which had been alight all through. The principal devotee present on the occasion interpreted it as a calculated counter move.

Almost the same time, some sabre jets of Pakistan Air Force appeared on the skies of Srinagar and hovered around the airport being their principal target. But their mission was foiled and their design frustrated.

Again in 1971, during the Bangladesh war, Nandbab exerted at the meta physical plane bringing into action, in his own characteristic way, his supernatural powers for the overall good of the humanity. He stretched his ethereal personality to re-establish true humanness with reinforced foundation of moral and spiritual life. There was nothing credal, dogmatic, parochial to sectarian about it. It was all universal and human. It was broad and inclusive.

Nandbab was ill. He was confined to bed. That time he was at village Nunar. Unable to move by himself, one day he suddenly asked one of his close disciples to shift him to Srinagar. The disciple was surprised. The saint was sick and why should he have asked to shift him to Srinagar ? Apparently there was no reason. He thought over. Concluding that Nandbab would not have asked him for no purpose to move him to the city, he made preparations for Nandbab's departure.

On reaching Srinagar, Nandbab was escorted to the residence of a senior devotee at Karan Nagar, as it was here that he could be given medical treatment. A member of the resident family was himself a doctor and besides there were some proficient doctors practising in the same locality. But who knew or could know the fixed purpose of Nandbab's coming to Srinagar even in illness. It needed the clear eye of understanding 'bodhachakshu' to realise the reality.

While Nandbab had outwardly given himself to medical treatment, he was inwardly seriously engaged with something behind and beyond the world of appearances. That something related to a part of the world which had been under heavy gunfire for long. He wanted to re-establish peace and tranquillity for the people there and in the region. The situation was grave. The movement of the seventh fleet of the United States of America had all the more aggravated it. The whole country was tense.

In those extremely anxious moments, Nandbab once again intervened. He wielded his sceptre majestically and asked one of close disciples to prepare some delicious Kashmiri food. That was done and offered to Nandbab. He ate some of it. He paused for a while. He looked in all the six directions and then observed in a satisfying manner—"every thing is alright now".

The following day it was on the Air that the Pakistan armed forces in Bangladesh had surrendered en masse and the war was over.

Usually Nandbab's movements were unpredictable. Way back in the sixties, he had left Srinagar for Delhi on a certain mission. On reaching old Delhi railway station, he suddenly changed his mind and asked the close disciple accompanying him to arrange for a horse-cart for going to the residence in old Delhi of a lady whom he named with paternal feeling. The disciple also knew the lady as the daughter of Razdan (Mahnoori) parivar of Tankipora mohalla in Srinagar, with whom Nandbab had stayed for many years, as already mentioned. Married to me, this lady and I were those days living on Delhi

University side in a colony called Shakti Nagar. Those days a large number of Kashmiri Pandit families were residing that side in colonies like Kamla Nagar, Jawahar Nagar, Roop Nagar, Rana Pratap Bagh and Shakti Nagar etc.

But the disciple did not know our address in Delhi and without address how could he reach us in a big city like Delhi. 'Had Nandbab given even the slightest inkling to him before their departure from Srinagar, he would have collected the Delhi address of the lady', the disciple thought to himself. But that had not been done. He was in a fix. He mentioned his difficulty to Nandbab. But, Nandbab insisted. A horse-cart was arranged.

Nandbab seated himself alongside the cart-driver and guided him all through from area to area, colony to colony, street to street, lane to lane, till they reached the particular house at Shakti Nagar where we were residing.

That was Nandbab and his spiritual Vision and powers divine. What has been mentioned here is just illustrative. It is only a drop from the ocean of the miracles this 'Wonder Saint of Kashmir' performed in his life-time. If one attempts to cover all of his miraculous performances, that alone will make a big book by itself. The scope of this article does not permit that.

Nandbab's Merger, with Eternity !

Spiritually having lived a meaningful and significant life with proper understanding of the scriptural ideal of the worth of human life and having invested it with joy and zest for the weal of mankind, Nandbab entered *mahasmadhi* on the 10th October, 1973, in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, in the capital city of Delhi, where he had been admitted for treatment.

According to the written account of Nandbab's last days in AIIMS, Shri Prem Nath Sadhu (Sadhuram) of Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, says : (in his commentary on this authors's book "NANDBABLEELA" on devotional songs on Nandbab awaiting publication).

" — one day a Kashmiri youngman conveyed personally to me that Swamiji had desired that I should call on him the same day. As directed, I some how managed to meet Nandbab in the hospital and stayed with him for about half an hour. He then confided to me his *Sankalpa* of leaving his mortal body after three days, and asked me to keep it a guarded secret. Exactly the same thing happened. For the first and the last time, I bowed at the feet of this great divine personality. What is most surprising is that prior to this Nandbab and I were not at all familiar with each other."

The Last Journey

Few of the close disciples and devotees of Nandbab who had accompanied the latter for his hospitalisation, took charge of the mortal remains of the saint. The news spread. Kashmiris in the capital city gathered in large number at AIIMS, including some members of the Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi. Expressing their deep-reverence for the departed, they wanted the last rights to be performed in Delhi. When contacted on telephone, devotees at Srinagar strongly pleaded for shifting the holy body to Srinagar quickly, as thousands of devotees and admirers from both the communities were eagerly waiting for Nandbab's last 'darshan' and to pay tribute of respect to their benefactor. The moral body was flown to Srinagar for the last rites. Hundreds of his devotees and admirers had assembled at the Srinagar airport to receive the mortal body of the mystic saint of twentieth century of Kashmir. The whole airport complex reverberated with chanting of *shlokas* from scriptures. Ritual preliminaries were devotionally performed at Srinagar. Profusely bedecked with bunches of bouquets, wreaths and garlands of flowers of rainbow colours, the gun-carriage carrying the mortal body of the saint, ever worshipped by the constant devotees, — *nityam-ashrit poojitah* — was wheeled round the city of Srinagar on public demand. Each bouquet, wreath and garland gave whiffs of fragrance of deep devotion of devotees for Nandbab. His face looked as radiant as ever. One had to convince oneself that his *punya atma* had departed leaving the earthly body behind.

Thousands of people in tears of mourning moved, shoulder to shoulder, in the funeral procession, chanting verses from holy scriptures. Many more longing for the last glimpse of the One seated in Godhood, *adhirohah,* showered flowers of obeisance from their house-windows and house-tops en route the funeral procession which was lined on both sides of the road by vast numbers of plaintive people.

Winding its way through the streets of Srinagar, as the funeral procession reached near the house of Pandit Maheshwar Nath Razdan (Mahnoori) in Tankipora mohalla a strange thing happened which more than amazed everyone in the massive funeral procession and around. It was astonishing. It was surprising. The gun-carriage had suddenly stopped at that place for sometime. The few disciples, sitting beside the holy corpse of Nandbab in the vehicle were getting anxious. So were others too. He just could not answer their queries. He was himself flabbergasted. He checked and rechecked as an experienced driver. He did not find any disorder in the machine and yet the vehicle did not move despite his strenuous efforts. After a few minutes when the driver tried again, the vehicle moved forward. Exactly the same thing happened at Karafalli mahalla, in Shalakadal area, near the residence of Swamini Smt. Satided. Here also the gun-carriage halted for couple of minutes. The driver tried hard. He did everything he could within his experience and expertise. The vehicle did not budge. It moved only when it had to proceed in the forward direction.

What happened at both the places was *ashcharyajanak chamatkar* for the driver, devotees and all other persons present. Those with their minds fixed on Nandbab with unswerving devotion, *ananya bhakti,* and endowed with unflinching faith, *Sraddha*; the knowledgeable who knew Nandbab and his mystic ways; had a convincing interpretation to offer. Even while departing from this earthly world Nandbab very well remembered the house of Razdan's (Mahnoori), and that particular place in Tankipora, where he had stayed for over two decades, reverentially and painstakingly served all the time by the entire 'parivar' of Razdans' (Mahnoori) and where he had blossomed to a great Kashmiri mystic saint of twentieth century. He halted and so did the vehicle too. His halt at this place, in the course of his last journey was, in fact, a visible expression of his affection and 'ashirwad' for Razdans in token of his sublime feelings for them. At Karafalli mahalla he halted for a different reason. That was as a mark of his veneration for his Gurumata Swamini Satided and her holy seat, asan. He did obeisance to her who had predicted his appearance on the spiritual horizon of Kashmir long ago.

As the funeral procession reached near the cremation ground, the large number of *shraddhalu,* who had already assembled there for making meticulous arrangements for a befitting finale, joined the procession showering flowers and flowers all the way, all the time, till the funeral pyre was lit. Some of the mourners prostrated themselves before the pyre, some of them circumambulated the pyre and many others sorrowfully sobbed —

'Oh! our dearly loved Nandbab.'
"*Vai! sani tathi Nandbabo.*"

In the forepart of mourners one could see late Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah with his hands raised in prayer and his head bowed in reverence.

It was, indeed, an unprecedented spectacle of offering *shraddhanjali* on the last journey of God's chosen one, never witnessed before in whole of Kashmir.

That was Nandbab : The Bastion of Hope

Ever established in the beaming bliss of the pure consciousness of the great Self in him, Nandbab was not an ordinary mortal. He was an embodiment of superhuman acumen and achievements. While living fully in the world of entanglements, he had completely disentangled himself from the meshes of the world like a lotus in a swamp. He had forsaken his personal comforts. He was a selfless and sublime man of action, a *karamyogi.* As a roving ambassador of the Lord of Universe, he went about indefatigably distributing the treasures of higher wisdom, extending his help, in his own ways, to the needy in the supreme spirit of service to mankind as the service to God. The wooden staff in his right hand, the dagger tucked in his waist band and the axe on his left shoulder, which he carried with him wherever he went, symbolised the power of action, *kriyashakti*, the Divine had veted in him.

As an embodiment of mysticism and humanism, he was the Friend of All *samatalsah*; the Doer of Good to All, *sama shubhankarah*; the Uplifter of the Poor, *dinasadhakah*; Pure in Body, Speech and Mind, *trishuklah.*

Throughout his worldly existence, he bloomed in the lake of God's Grace, wafting all the time, all around, in the ethereal form of pleasant fragrance, the message of virtue, purity, compassion and humanism.

Nandbab was not static. He lived the dynamic life of spirituality. He lived in this world, 'samsara', but did not allow 'samsara' to get into him. He had transcended ego and become a man of universal awareness, *brahmajnana.* Having assimilated the meaning of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, he had developed a universal outlook. A verse from Kena Upanishad says : 'If man realises it here, then is there true life for him Nandbab had very well realised it.

We never made a shelter for himself, but gave shelter to others. He did not have any place as his permanent home. He moved on and on. Wherever he went, he was welcomed with open arms. He belonged to everyone and everyone belonged to him. That was the spirit on both sides and it worked well.

It was after *mahanirvana* of this eternal and infallible spiritual guide, that some of his disciples organised themselves and established an *ashram* at Shalakadal near Karfalli mahalla in Srinagar. Soon the *ashram* hummed with pious activities and became a place of pilgrimage for all.

It causes severe suffering even to think that with the repugnant drama of disaster and death enacted by militant zealots, creating a cyclonic terror for the innocent minuscule minority community in the land of Abhinavgupta and Utpalacharya, Vikramaditya and Budshah, Lal Ded and Sheikh-ul-Alam who taught tolerance and togetherness, and consequent traumatic, forced exodus of the entire minority community from their own homeland, the *ashram* has become a sanctum of the 'Sound of Silence' over the years.

-'शफ़क़ भारती'

अँधकार जुल्म की रात का जब
घना से भी घनेरा हो जाए।
नज़र की दूरियों तक भयंकर माहोल
आतङ्क की यातनाओं का छा जाए।
अत्यन्त पीड़ा से होके तार–तार,
बिखरी पड़ी हो जा–बजा ज़िन्दगी।।
व्यथा की, वेदना की, हजूम–ए ग़म, सितम की
चीख–ो पुकार की गूँज।
गूँज, उस व्याकुल स्वर की जो
साज़–ए दिल के टूटने पर निकलता है।
गूँज पर गूँज, दर्द की दास्तान लिए,
फ़र्श से अ़र्श की ऊँचाईयों को जा पहुंचती है,
इन्स़ाफ़ मांगने।।
रुख़ासार–ए सहर की रोशनी की
पहली किरण तब
उतरती है आकाश की बुलन्दी से।
बरसती है
चीरती हुई अँधेरे की सियाह चादर,
लहू बहता है अँधकार की रग–रग से।
अपने ही करतूतों के कौंधों पर सवार
तह–ए ख़ाक चला जाता है,
ख़ाक हो जाता है।।

'जु़ल्म आखिर जु़ल्म है, बढ़ता है तो मिट जाता है'

The roar of the gun, which has stifled the speech of the sacred, will, after all, be silenced by the invisible forces of spirituality.

Prayers will go up; blessings will come down. Divine will intervene. It has happened in past. It will happen now. That is God's promise. Says Lord Shri Krishna in the holy Srimadbhagvad Gita. The Abode of Saints and Sages, *reshvair,* will flourish again. *Sombul, yeosman, yamberzal, kwongposh, pamposh* will be in bloom, whiffing around the fragrance of the message of *shanti, sakoon* and *shaan. Kastoor, Kukil, Qumir, poshnool* in flocks will return to their homeland.

"How green was my valley' will no more be the expression of ones feelings. It will be "how green is my valley."

CHAPTER 15

MIRZAKAK

—T.N. HANGLOO

The rich heritage of having and nursing an unflinching faith in the galaxy of saints, seers, sages, sufis and mystic poets of Kashmir, has always been an essential ingredient of Kashmiri culture. This has been more so with the Kashmiri Pandit community now exiled to the plains of Jammu and elsewhere in the country. Even after the mass exodus, they have carried this inherent, sacred and inveterate faith along.

Our community evinced keen interest in constructing ashrams in the fond memory of their revered gurus, giving birth to a sort "ashram culture". This is besides the coming up of Bhawani Mandir (Maharagnya temple) at Bhawani Nagar, in Janipur, Jammu, Chakreshwar Sharika Sedh Peeth at Faridabad; Shailputri Sedh Peeth (Baramulla) at Munshi Check, Gole Gujral, Jammu, and the like.

In spite of the realization that the paramount significance of asthapans and ancient shrines lay at original sacred places, the community, by and large, feels that though, per force away from the sacredness of such holy precincts, there may be Divine releases from such fountainheads through the method of age-old *upasana* and the prayer/meditation connected with it.

Amidst a score of such ashrams, lately to come up in Jammu is Swami Mirzakak (Kak Saib) Ashram at Nagrota, where the Mirzakak Trust Hangalgund started the construction of the Ashram in the sacred memory of Swamiji. While a memorial Samadhi has already come up, further construction work of the Ashram is going on as per project schedule.

Swami Mirzakak was a Kashmiri Pandit saint of mid-eighteenth century (1744). Kak Saib was the manifestation of great spirituality and a mystic poet of the highest order, whose each *vaakh* contained lot of meaning and message. In fact, based on divine revelations these convey meaning to overflow several volumes and tones, besides radiating fragrance, emitting brilliance and splendour outshining many a myrtle dazzling like lustre-illumine in the entire galaxy of renowned saints of Kashmir that have appeared from time to time. It is further elucidated in a very brief conversation between his disciples and him. When a disciple asked Mirzakak as to what "Kaya" meant, Swamiji replied 'Kaya is Maya'. On asking further as to what was meant by "Maya", Swamiji replied it is "Chhaaya".

While the saints belong to all religions and places alike, yet for mundane purposes, Mirzakak belonged to village Hangalgund, foothills of Kokernag, 78 kilometres away from Srinagar. The area comes in the realm of Breng-Pargana where Brengi flows perennially from the rich reserves of snow-clad mountains, in addition to concomitant Kokernag's fresh water trout stream. If Kashmir is the crown of Bharat, it is Breng that is the crown of Kashmir. In this village some 70 Pandit families used to live and about 40 more families were living in nearby and adjacent small hamlets, Irkumoo, Bindhu, Kokernag, Bidder Soafshahi and Doomatbal. Just 2 kilometres down below the village Hangalgund, another Pandit village was Saagam with about 80 families. Half a kilometre away from Hangalgund is Bidder named after Bidhadevi where Baladatya in mid-sixth century had constructed some structures known as *agarhaars*. The mini-remnants thereof in the form of dressed-up big stone slabs were found sporadically in Bidder-Hangalgund down the Kokernag stream along with an idol of Hengla-Devi, representing the brilliance of Lakshmi that lies amid Kokernag nallah in the Hangalgund village.

One Lassa Pandit lived at Hangalgund who had two sons. The elder was named as Bula Pandit and the younger as Mirza Pandit. Bula Pandit was a *grahasti* and managed a very well-to-do family. He had five sons and two daughters. These five sons, nephews of Mirzakak, constituted the dynasty of Swamiji.

Mirza Pandit looked altogether different from the very beginning itself. He was an embodiment of simplicity and celibacy. He exhibited ripe and stark tendencies of seeking pure, pious and simple life in consonance with back-to-nature phenomenon, choosing to spend time in silence, in isolated places, yet finding himself busy in normal routine and other chores of life, even attending to extreme manual work. He showed keen interest in rearing cattle and tilling the land. A *vaakh* of Swami Mirzakak goes as under:

> अनिस क्याह करि कर्म, यम्य ज़्यन सोर ज़नम्
> मानिथ ती मे वोनुम, साक्षात भजने राम रामै।
> दयि नाव ह्यजि, रसय, युथ न कांह ति बोज़िय ठसय,
> तति अन्दर सोंय टॉठ बन्सी, भजन नाम राम रामै।

He remained absorbed in his own ecstasy, blissfully listening to divine melody every moment, the inner chords of which had struck much earlier for him. He apparently looked to be meandering and sauntering around, but took to devout *sadhna* and yogic life at an island, formed by shimmering, gushing and tossing waters of Kokernag (Kuktesher) trout stream at Hangalgund village, overseen by 'Trensandhyatirath," Soundh Brari' on eastern side (5 km), Doomatbal Narayan Puri 1.5 km on south-eastern side where 'Ardhanareswar' Shiv Parvati ancient temple, a spring beside an ancient Vishnu Murti and other statues had been discovered in an amazing manner. Just on 3-4 km crow-flying distance, on the other side of hillock across Doomatbal presides the great Neil-Kashyap's son — Verinag—the source of the Vitasta.

Mirzakak's Samadhi also exists in this very island. The entire Samadhi area presented a verdant look where trees like green gauge, wild plums, birds and sour cherry besides some berry bushes existed. On the boughs, twigs, branches, crotches and leafy clusters of this plantation were always kept the *Kheer Takoos* (earthen plates) to serve feast for chirping birds especially on annual Jag ceremony while other trees, like willows and pippins, accommodated saffron and red cloth with Swastik flags.

The Jag at Hangalgund always meant a big fair spreading over a week's time. Hustle and bustle, Pooja Path, hawan and thronging of devotees at the Samadhi with Kheer-filled pots was a normal sight. A mighty chinar with massive canopy provided overall shade in the adjacent sprawling area. The Hawan was traditionally performed in the premises of Vedkak Ji, one of the nephews of Mirzakak in whom he had reposed his bosom in his life-time. Bajjan Kirtans used to be held throughout the period and a *Sadak* played a melodious tune on Sarang during the entire deliberations year after year till his death.

Some renowned saints of Kashmir have also paid their obeisance at the Samadhi. They included Swami Laxmanjoo, Swami Nandab (Nunner), Bhagwan Gopinath, Kral Bab, Sedh Moul and Swami Prasadh Kak (Grateh Bab). Several Sadhus and Yogi performed *sadhna* at his Samadhi. These include sadaks from the entire Hardwar belt, Varanasi, Mathura, Bihar, Allahabad and the South. Chief among them was Dandi-Swami. Learned Brahmins of Srinagar would also attend, besides many journalists, research scholars and spiritualists.

Though the trout stream of Kokarnag has always been a big craze for fish anglers, everybody refrained from fishing in and around the island area. Renowned physician Dr. Ali Mohd. Jan, a keen angler, would delete the area from his fishing schedule, on his weekend visits to Kokernag. Likewise, European and other tourists visiting Kokarnag, exercised caution while fishing there.

Mirzakak had to spend some transitory and formative years at Achan village in Pulwama Tehsil where he was adopted by his aunt *masi*. After her death and that of her husband he returned to Hangalgund where he was received with great affection by his elder brother again. He immediately took to the practice of spiritualistic process amid his outward mundane chores.

At Achan, the twin asthapans of Jagat Amba Devasthan and Jagannath temple adjacent to the fields of his aunt had equally attracted him to his divine pursuits, whereas outwardly he donned temporal mantle, attending to household works.

One day while he was working in his paddy fields, a flash flood occurred and his mother could not come with the usual meal as per routine. Mirzakak after a hard toil felt too much hungry and rested near a tree Jagat Amba, it is said, appeared in the form of his mother and fed him a Thali of Kheer. After the auspicious moment was over, Swamiji had completely been draped in divine glory and radiated *Ojus* and *Tejus*.

Meanwhile, after the flood receded, his mother came and asked him to take the meal, explaining the delay. To her surprise, he said he had no appetite having taken the meal only some minutes before from her. His mother took it as a complete remonstrance and insisted on having not come at all. He immediately understood that it was Jagat Amba Herself that had fed him and immediately took the meal his mother had got for him.

Though Swamiji had no formal schooling, during his brief attendance at a madrassa run by Akhoon Sahib, he outshined many classmates there and learnt the Persio-Arabic script at a lightning speed.

In the meantime, time for Guru Deeksha merely for *parampara* seemed to ripen, which he obtained at Hangalgund on his return from Achan. A staunch Sharika devotee was divinely directed by Her, while he was doing Parikrama in the wee hours at Hari Parbat, to perform this formality. So, on his appointment as Kardar of Brang, he came into contact with Mirzakak and fulfilled this obligation.

His *Vaakh Potthies* in possession of some of the dynasty members are in reality a rich treasure-trove based on the teachings of Vedas and Upanishads bearing striking similarities-- containing several *Rakysopedsha* deciphering of which can yield many a key on the spiritual journey. *Vaakh Amritvani* throws ample light on the entire dynamics of spirituality and mystic philosophy. Some Vaaks herein form only a tip of the Iceberg. And maybe, time dawns in the near future when the Mirzakak Trust would have collected the whole plethora of *Vaakhwaani.*

A quick look at Mirzakak in print reveals that some illustrious authors like late Sarwanand Kaul Premi, Prof. Baljinath Pandit, Rajinder Premi, Ravinder Premi and Prof. S.L. Pandita have provided some writings on him. Shri S.N. Bakaya has provided a rare reference of Swamiji having been the guru of Saint Shakar Sahib, the guru brother of Swami Jeevan Shah Sahib in previous *Janama.* Shri P.N.K. Bamzai mentions Swami Mirzakak as a mystic saint along with Aziz Darvesh. Prof. J.L. Kaul in his book 'Lal Ded' makes mention regarding collection and selection of Vaaks as an addition to Bhaskar Razdan's 60 Vaak — "the first bunch of 33 were in collection secured from a person in Hangalgund". In the footnote of this book, he quotes a letter of Shri Bamzai that "Hangalgund batch", one may presume, would contain many a *Vaakh* of Mirzakak. His *Vaakhs* are on different tunes, each running into several hundreds or thousands even. Shri Pushkernath Hangloo has made some comments on Prof. Baljinath Pandit's writing. Some popular tunes are as :-

Bajjan Ram Ram; Ram Ram Rab Prabhu Ji: Dayie Zaan Judha Su Su; Zaan Isher Parmesher Suye-Suye; Rum Reshun Aye; Teiuth var may detum deevoo, Toashum Ake Vena Poshay and the like.

A *vaakh* denoting his conversation with Guru goes as:

शे नफच़ अख प्रानी
शेठ प्रानी गयि गुरी
शेठ गरि दोहतु रातुय
हिसाबी राम रामय।।

Mirzakak, like many other saints, strongly held that in the spiritual process sometimes a practitioner acquires the ability to work miracles and that if it is utilized, exaggerated and exposed for personal gains, the reputation of such spiritual powers is not only lost but creates negative influence as well. It is because of this reason that saints have always deprecated use of miracles.

Swamiji had also no appreciation whatsoever for occurrence of any miracle, marvel and other allied feat. He generally restrained any fanfare about it and had all along shown utter aversion and abhorrence for such miracles. A *vaak* in this behalf goes as:

करामात खुद नुमायी
यस कांसि खोंश आयी
दावा खुदायी
फायदा क्या राम रामय।।

Accordingly, bulk of many breath-taking miracles out of normal happenings and chores did not find any prominence to be kept in any chronological depository except rarely in the memory banks of his disciples and contemporaries of that time only to trickle and percolate down as having witnessed at, first-hand, or as a result of low tone whispers or suppressed murmurs on boisterous conversations within the ear shots. It is believed that miracles and marvels that occurred in his time did not leave the common people alone yawning in amazement but his contemporary saints too. It is said that to those who claimed advanced spiritualistic attainment and dared to assess his spiritualistic power, he would very gently put a spoke in their wheels only to make them eat the humble pie, consequently bringing them down to their knees bowing before him (i.e. Mirzakak) in shame.

In this context, an example or two would suffice to throw light on it. Once a self-proclaimed learned Pandit came to Swamiji from Srinagar and offered some almonds. Swamiji who was with his disciples in a *vaakh* session ordered the almond lot to be divided into two parts. He retained one portion and asked the visiting Pandit to have the other portion distributed amongst all the disciples present there. All the almonds distributed thus turned as blanks to the utter shock of the visitor. Subsequently, Swamiji ordered to break open the portion he had retained. Every almond produced a twin kernel. The visitor melted down like an icicle and prostrated at the feet of Swamiji quite regretful and flagellating at his intentions. A *vaakh* of Swamiji on this incident goes like this:

पोरमुत गव गोरमुत पुली
नज़ि हरकत न हरकती।

Swamiji, while at Hangalgund at a particular time engaged in *satsang* with his disciples, was reported to have passed through a baker's shop in Habakadal getting oven fresh cakes as desired by a disciple in the *satsang* session at Hangalgund.

It is said that cholera outbreak was quite common then and Swamiji used to thwart the entry of this infliction and its effect in his surrounding areas by shouting "not on to this side—nay not there". Then he would distribute just some grains of rice among the people which always served as a very effective prophylactic measure for the ensuing outbreak.

The terror unleashed by the rulers of the day had, in fact, during the 1740s itself, resulted in forced exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits to parts of Lucknow, Lahore etc. People were writhing under the ruthless and tyrannical rule of the Pathans. The Sikhs of Punjab had twice attempted to grab Kashmir but to no avail. During one such attempt in 1814, the Sikh army while crossing through Loren-Toasmaidan side had to flee back on hearing some strange shouts and cries on reaching a spot where one Wali Syed Chein rested in grave.

However, during a chilly night of December 1818, Kakji wove and recited a *Vaakhvain,* apparently as a sequel to save the life of his disciple from the gallows if he did not convert as ordered by the then Governor Azeem Khan. Swamiji recited a Bhavishvani *Vaakh'.*

नरसिंह भगवान शब्द तु नारान
शब्दय द्राव वाक गव, वाक गुरु
गुरु नानक पथ वाक गुरु
सिख अवतार छुय सूत्य सूती।।

After this, a Muslim Faqir who was the disciple of Kakji himself but a Mursheed of Governor came to see Kakji who ignored his salutations indicating his displeasure for the Governor. The Faqir went back to convey this displeasure to his disciple (Governor) who immediately left the Valley and kept his brother Jabbar Khan incharge. A fierce battle took place at Shajimarg where Sikhs became victorious. The fallout of Bavishwani appeared in early January 1819 when that Dhar duo, i.e. Birbal Dhar and Raj Dhar, had succeeded in wooing the Sikh rulers to wrest Kashmir from the then rulers by making the venture a third, time. This time the seer had seen with *tour de force* their victory.

An affluent devotee at Kanikadal, Srinagar, had incessantly implored Swamiji to accept his invitation of going there. A guard kept at the gate by the host was asked not to allow anybody to enter the house because the host was engrossed in arrangement; inside for his guest.

Swamiji left alone from Habbakadal towards his host at Kanikadal. But the guard stopped his entry mistaking him for a stranger and telling him that entry is banned as there is some '*Gangal*' (busy anxious moments coupled with panicky actions) inside the house. Mirzakak without entering into any argument with the guard went away repeating the very words *Gangal, Gangal.* Within minutes, the entire premise; at Kanikadal got surrounded by the police arresting the host under the charges of some alleged embezzlement bringing the real *gangal* to the house. Disciples at Habbakadal learnt it immediately on his return and devised a plan for the removal of the *gangal* curse. They got some almonds, sweets etc. and placing these in a plate presented to Kakji. On his enquiry as to what it was all about, they in one voice submitted the *gangal* has vanished and gone away from Kanikadal. Kakji also suddenly joined them saying oh, lo, it is vanished and gone, so let us go there sharing the *prasad* from the plate. Simultaneously, the Kanikadal devotee was seen coming back after having been exonerated honourably and acquitted of the charges, reinstated to his position and status.

Again, in a house at Banamohalla the marriage of a son in the family was performed but the next day, the bride was seen weeping, lamenting, wailing and crying on the head of the bridegroom. On enquiry she told them that he had passed away, leaving her shattered. While a pal of gloom enveloped the entire family and other guests who were yet on the feasting spree, the father of the bridegroom, a strong devotee and fearless disciple of Swamiji, calmed down every member of the family, including the guests, and the bride, locked the room in which the body was lying and told them that he is here and is not dead. Keeping the keys in his possession, he rushed to Swamiji who was engaged in a spiritual session in Dal Lake in a *doonga* listening and engrossed in *bhajan-kirtans* and Satsang with his devotees reciting *vaakhs*. The aggrieved devotee following in a boat got hold of the *doonga* and prostrated before Swamiji, invoking mercy.

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 16

KASHMIRI SAINT POET—MIRZAKAK

—DR. (MRS.) KRISHNA RAINA

Kashmir is a home of many distinguished scholars, founders of Indian poetic thought historians, and saint poets. We are proud of the great luminaries-sages and saints and mystic poets who developed the cultural heritage of our homeland. Shri Mirzakak is one saint poet who was in the long line of Lalleshwari, Nund Reshi, Rupbawani, Parmanand and Krishen Joo Razdan, Mirzakak has not written any thing about himself. Shri Sarwanand Koul 'Premi' has written a booklet on Mirzakak in which three or four poems composed by the poet have been given. When I saw the manuscripts of the poet at Hangalgund village I came to conclusion that Shri Premi had selected a few lines from here and a few from there from the manuscripts of Shri Mirzakak.

Descendents of Shri Mirzakak's fathers family used to live at Hangalgund village that is thirteen miles away from Anantnag near to Kukarnag, I had been to this village in 1965 to see his manuscripts, There whatever I heard orally and collected is reproduced in this article. Mirzakak was born in 1748. His father was Shri Lassa Pandith. This was confirmed by descendents of his family and their kulguru. There are different versions, about his birth place. Some are of the opinion that he was born at Hangalgund and some say at Achan village in district Pulwama. But it is widely believed that he was born and brought up in Hangalgund as his brother's family descendents and his followers lived at that place. He had shown his mystic attainments there, his anniversary is celebrated there on 2nd day of Jesta Krishna Paksh. His samadhi is at the river bank under the chinar tree in Hangalgund. I obtained a list of his followers and genealogical tree from Shri Shiv jee raina at Hangalgund. Mirzakak's followers were Nidankak, Jaikak, Parakak, and Dinanath. The genealogy of the saint poet is produced on page 230.

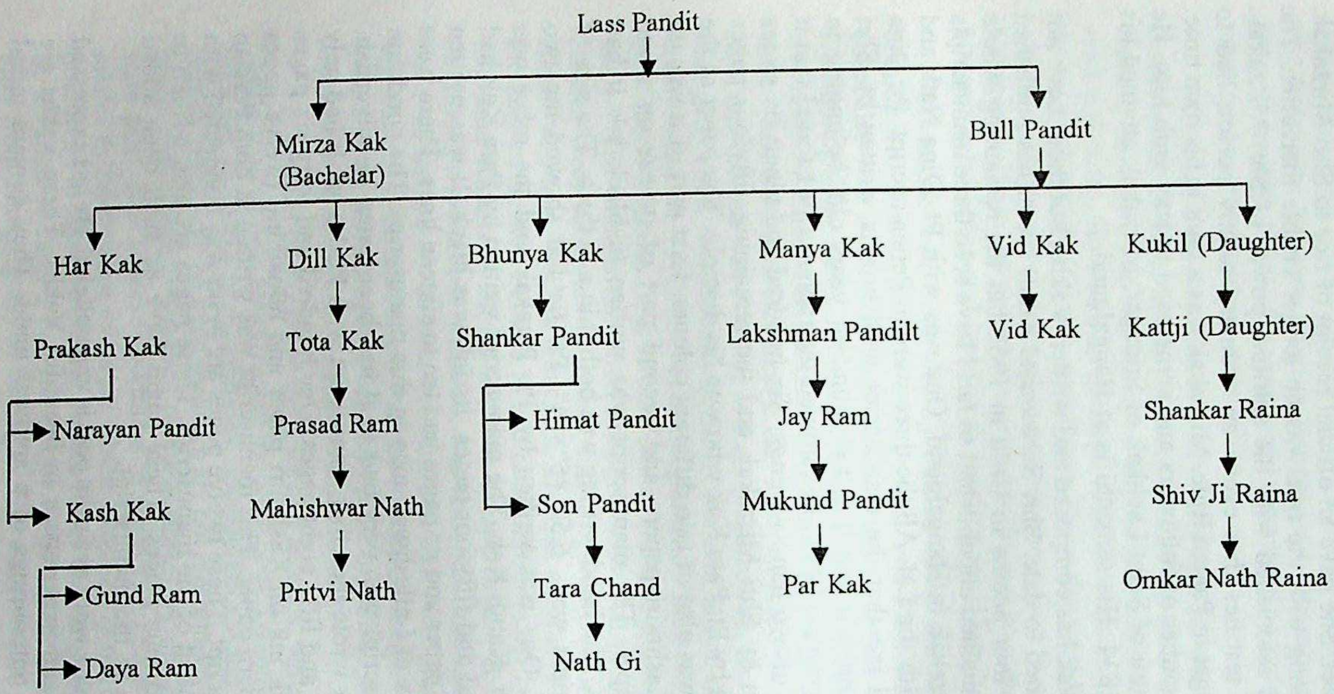
Mirzakak's parents died at a very early age. He was looked after by his mother's sister and spent some time of his early age at village Achen. Mirzakak had not received any formal education but could read and write. He was a farmer and used to work at his farm from morning to evening in sun and shade. From the very beginning he was of saintly nature. He used to ponder about God Soul and world. His spiritual nature directed him to be free from this worldly business. He was a bachelor and lived with his brother's family,

Mirzakak was born during Pathan Rule during which the condition of Kashmiri people in general and Kashmiri Hindus in particular was miserable. During this period Durrani Dynasty had twentynine Governors and among them Abdul-Shah-Ashak's reign was reign of terror. The Hindus of Kashmir felt a sigh of peace only when Raja Sukhjeewan became Governor of Kashmir in 1754[1]. Pt. Mahanand Dhar was Peshkar of Raja Sukhjeewan. But the situation changed when the Pathan Sardar Nuru Din Khan defeated Raja Sukhjeewan in 1762 and became governor himself. In 1765 he appointed Pt. Kailas Dhar as his Peshkar and Mir-Mukeem-Kanth as justice. The political situation changed with change of Governors. Hindus were subjected to untold sufferings when Mir-Phakiru-La-Kanth was appointed as Governor. He was so cruel that he sought the help of Bomba Sardars to kill Kashmiri Hindus. He forced two thousand Hindus to accept Islam to escape death.[2] A large number of Hindus were killed. Mirzakak was born at a time when Kashmiris were subjected to extremely harsh living conditions owing to oppression of Afghan Rulers. Pathans introduced Begar (forced labour used chiefly for transport purpose) on an organised basis and as a characteristic feature of Afghan Administration.

A number of stories of miracles and legends, which formed the tradition of his day, are related to the Saint poet. To some extent these miracles manifest impossibilities, exaggerations and superstitious beliefs of the time he lived in which are not reproduced here although much importance is attached to these stories by the flowers of the saint poet. It is however pertinent to reproduce one incident which relates to the practice of Begar which prevailed at the time the Saint poet lived in Kashmir during Pathan Rule. The Saint poet was asked by a Pathan to carry a bag-full of rice weighing 60 Seers (nearly 55-kgs) from Hangalgund to Srinagar. The story related in his village states that Goddess came in the form of a little Girl to the rescue of the Saint poet. She gave an official receipt of rice to Shri Mirzakak. The Girl along with the rice was no longer visible thereafter. The Pathan was astonished with the spiritual power of Shri Mirzakak. This event testifies that even an ordinary saintly person had to undergo Begar in Pathan Rule. Mirzakak was a saint in his own time. He had a number of followers and some used to stay with him. He was also Guru of Saint Lachkak of Srinagar. Mirzakak attained his nirwan in 1834. His samadhi is at Hangalgund.

Mirzakak has composed and written Vakhs, but these have not been published to date. Shri Sarwanand Koul, Premi has published Mirzakak's four poems in Urdu in 1963 but the remaining whole work has remained unpublished so far. I have seen three manuscripts of Shri Mirzakak in Hangalgund. One was with Pt. Dina Nath and two were with Jia Lal. All the three were in Persian script. Pt. Dina Nath ji told me that the manuscript with him is written by Shri Mirzakak him self and it is two hundred years old, belonging to eighteenth century. When I examined the manuscript I found that it was written in two hand writings. Six hundred and ninetysix pages were written by Shri Mirzakak and the remaining fiftyfour pages were written by Pt. Para Kak who was his disciple. The paper of the manuscript was also of two different colours. First part of it was on yellowish Kashmiri paper and second part of it was on white Kashmiri paper. The manuscript was written in black ink It had uneven lines. The hand writing was both thin and thick. The size of the manuscripts was 6.5" ×5"× 4". Pt. Jia Lal showed me two manuscripts. One was written by Pt. Parakak and the other was written by Pt. Kanth Kak. The manuscript written by Para Kak had three hundred and fiftyfour pages. Its ink was black. It was written on Kashmiri paper and its pages had ten to sixteen lines. There were some Vakhas of Lalleshwari also in this manuscript. The condition of the manuscript was very bad as it had been eaten by silverfish. Pt. Kanthkak wrote the other manuscript with Pt. Jia lal. It had only one hundred and fifty eight pages. One hundred and forty six pages were in black ink on Kashmiri paper and remaining twelve pages were on modern paper. This manuscript was written in both Persian and Sharda script. These twelve pages are in no way connected with the main content of the manuscript. These pages are also written in red ink at various places. These pages have as such been added subsequently to the manuscript.

Mirzakak's work as a saint poet is unparalleled. He has expressed his feelings and experiences in beautiful Vakhs. These vakhs are spontaneous outpourings of a spiritual mind. They contain moral


Lass Pandit
Mirza Kak
(Bachelar)
Bull Pandit
Har Kak
Prakash Kak
Narayan Pandit
Kash Kak
Gund Ram
Daya Ram
Dill Kak
Tota Kak
Prasad Ram
Mahishwar Nath
Pritvi Nath
Bhunya Kak
Shankar Pandit
Himat Pandit
Son Pandit
Tara Chand
Nath Gi
Manya Kak
Lakshman Pandilt
Jay Ram
Mukund Pandit
Par Kak
Vid Kak
Vid Kak
Kukil (Daughter)
Kattji (Daughter)
Shankar Raina
Shiv Ji Raina
Omkar Nath Raina

Geneanlogical tree of Saint Poet

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* For further reference - Hindi or Kashmiri Nirgun sant kavya Tulnatmak Aadhyan By Dr. (Mrs) Krishna Raina Page 123 (Edition 1977) published by Sharda prakashan New Delhi 30

teachings of great value. He has always stressed a life of moderation and inner quest. He has given importance to the name of God, Shyam Sunder. His name is in inner and outer world. He admonishes a person to always pray to Naam Roop.[4] According to Mirzakak God is Shabd Brahm'. He has expressed his views that the main target is Para Braham, Omkar is a Bow, Worldly man is arrow and target is Braham so one should be busy with Ram Naam[5].

There is no difference between the individual self and the universal self, the aim of human life is to realize this identity. Everything is of God. It is thinking of oneself, the ultimate goal is to understand this reality.[6] The whole Bhram and is His home and it is Shivmay. He is Prakash and Aakash. Brahm is no other than ones own self. When everything in the world belongs to him, then what can be offered to Him. Even the worshipper is not different than the object of worship. Constant awareness of the self is only worship befitting the Lord. There is no essential difference between the individual self and the universal self known as God. Liberation is nothing but recognition of once true self, as an embodiment consciousness and bliss as distinct from the body mind complex. There is no need of arduous practice for self-realization. He is happy with a simple flower like 'Vyana' flower. He is like sun and man is like a ray of sunlight. With the jnan-light I realised that He is within me and there is no difference in Him and me still I am His sevak.[7]

The body of Jiva is itself the abode of the Lord and as such we must direct our gaze within. We must try to realize God in our body by right understanding, it is not something to be learnt from books but from a guru who has successfully practised and realized. Without guru there is no jaana, it is impossible like growth without the seed[8]. Mirzakak had told Pandit (Guru) is essential as he is touch-bearer to show the right path to his disciple. He can show Soham to Jiva.

Mirzakak gives importance to Omkar and Yoga in his process of sadhna. Om is the sound automatically produced by the movements of pranas. According to the poet Omkar is Adipurush, it is light, it is past, present and future. One who utters Omkar is always free from worldly difficulties[9]. Ragyayoga is of high esteem and Guru is necessary for attaining the Bhram Gnyan. There is great need to research Mirzakak's poetry both literary and philosophically. The poet believes that a person must change himself. It is only when you are willing to change yourself then a change can happen in this world. This is so because both the willingness to change and the changed person within you is confined in yourself. It is a part and parcel of your prannas. Mirzakak was a famous Saint poet of Kashmir in 18th century.

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   Ghar Chus Jagi Ander
   Nibar Nav Vuchchi Zi Ander
   Bhajn Naam Ram Rarnya.
   Mirzakak, Ed Sarwanand Koul Premi Poem I Stanza 9 Edi 1963
5. *Om Gav Kamanay*
   Jeevay Jaan Teeray
   Nishan Braham
   Bhajan naam Ram Rarnya Ibid
   Poem stanza 2.
6. *Dayo soorui choonuy*
   vaichary yut myonuy
   yami zon tami monuy
   bhajan naam ram ramy
   poem I, stanza 18.
7. *Su Prakash drayi zuchah su chu Sinus gash*
   Nishi panaas booz main Bhasha nirnay jnan chu gash
   Khod be khoday yar chu Paanay Khas tasunday ba daas
   Toshi hyam aki Vyana Poshy sona Poshy su.
   Ibid., poen 4, stanza I. s Bina gur meli na jaanay
8. *Bina taph bani na rajya*
   Bina beej bovi na jagat
   Voopdi naam ram rarnya
   Ibid., poen 4, stanza I.
9. *Om gav aadipurush*
   Nathan hund su nathya
   Om gav Bhut Bhavishat
   Om gav Vartmanay
   Om gav Pramanay
   Ibid., poem I.

CHAPTER 17

SWAMI NAND LAL JI

—S.K. KAUL

Swami Nand Lal Ji was born in the year 1902 at Gurgari Mohalla, 'Zaina Kadal' Srinagar. His father, Pandit Sahaj Kaul, belonged to a well-to-do Kaul family, also known as "Kothdars". Swami Ji's forefathers were prominent bankers; they were bankers even to Maharaja Pratap Singh. They were ardent devotees of Goddess Jagadamba Sharika Devi. Be it the pleasant summer or cold winter, both males and females in the family would go for Parikrama to the Holy Mother at Hari-Parbat. Swami Nand Lal Ji's mother died very young, leaving behind her two sons and one daughter and it was the beginning of the orderly yatra for Swami Ji towards the goal which he had left halfway in his previous *Janama.* His step-mother was his first Guru whose way of life had forced the great saint of this century to adopt the Godly way.

In his youth, Swami Nand Lal Ji was very energetic and would command his fellow companions as is the case with a normal rich youth. His friend—late Pandit Naranjan Nath Ji Kaul, who was his cousin brother also, and Late Pandit Sham Lal Ji Saproo (Bai Toth) were his juniors in the school and he used to dominate over them. Swami Nand Lal Ji himself studied up to 8th class in that school. Both of them later turned into his ardent devotees when Swami Ji became a perfect Yogi. Swami Ji had left for his *Sadhana* at the age of 17 or 18 years after starting some business for a brief period of just a year and a half. Thereafter, young Swami Ji was not traceable for a long period of almost twenty years. Once he left his parental house, he never looked back.

Swami Nand Lal Ji was a *brahmachari* and was incarnated with sainthood by His Holiness Swami Lal Ji of Banaras. Swami Lal Ji, a great yogi, was so much impressed with the deeds of his *shishya* that at one point of time, he would offer his Aasana to him, which the latter would not accept as it is not right in the Guru-Shishya relationship. Swami Lal Ji is said to have observed that Swami Nand Lal Ji had done great Kirya in the shortest possible time; it had taken Swami Lal Ji a couple of years of *Sadhana to master it.* Swami Ji's way of life and *Sadhana* had left a lot of impact on his Guru Maharaj. Swami Lal Ji would often say: *"Baat bane gi wo hi jo Nand Lal ki ichha ho"* From the above statement, one can gauge as to what heights Swami Nand Lal Ji had gained in his youth alone.

Swami Nand Lal Ji had done most of his *Sadhana* in Bomai Sadhamaleun in Sopore, Kashmir. He was very much fond of nature and this had influenced greatly his way of life, be it living, wearing or eating. He was a total vegetarian and was fond of sofiana music. All singers of repute in this style of music would come and enthral him by their *ragas.* After completion of his *Sadhana,* Swami Ji settled in Sharada town in the Tanghdar area of Kashmir, where he had a small Ashram in the famous shrine of Sharada temple, a place even today called as "Sharda Mai Temple" by the inhabitants of that place who are mostly gujjars. Swami Ji had a set of local followers who were basically from Tikker Village (Kupwara) and were traders based at Sharada.

It was in the year 1947 when Pakistanis occupied that place that Swami Ji shifted to Tikker village, with his followers, and established his Ashram there on the hill top. It will not be out of place to mention here that at Sharada, when a Sikh gentleman was being followed by Qabailis to kill him, he found refuge ~~in~~ Swami Ji's Ashram. Upon inquiry, that Sikh gentleman mentioned to Swami Ji that he would be killed by the gunmen and begged for his life. While seeking for mercy, the gunmen asked him to come down and face death. The Sikh wept bitterly and begged for life from both. On this, Swami Ji consoled him and advised him not to worry but go down and see what they do. When the Sikh gentleman came down weeping to face the gunman and was asked to stand near the tree and face bullets because he was a "Kafir", God's grace was showered upon him. When they tried to press the trigger of their guns the bullets failed to come out of their guns. After trying thrice, the Qabailies bowed at the feet of Swami Ji and asked for his mercy and so the Sikh gentleman was saved. The Qabailies then beseeched Swami Ji to leave the place as they were aware of what kind of people would follow them into the Valley. Swami Ji ultimately left the place for Tikker. When he was establishing his new Ashram and digging was under process, he advised his devotees not to be afraid if they came across snakes, reptiles and other deadly creatures. His devotees, who were involved in digging and construction work were convinced that the site chosen by Swami Ji appeared to be the place where he had observed *Sadhana* in his previous birth. Big snakes and reptiles did appear at the site during construction work but left the place without causing any harm to the devotees. While going down under the earth just a few feet, they found a pair of Tongs, a Kangri, a chilum and some rice strewn along the Kangri, a Dhooni with ash and one saligram (Shivalinga) and fresh flowers. While seeing all this, one of his devotees, Pt. Niranjan Nath of a nearby village, who was lame by one leg, looked at Swami Ji in absolute astonishment. At this, Swami Ji repeated these words : *Nera Langyo, kya vanay hal yath jayi kotah chhu mal.* "(How shall I tell you, Nera Lungu, the secrets of this place, how many riches are hidden here). Swami Ji was very fond of using *chilum* and *charas*. When these articles were located, he told them to stop there, take out *chilum* the Kangri, tong and saligram and start filling up the place with bricks and stones for raising the plinth.

One could have a panoramic view of Sharada, as far as Sopore, Handwara and other places from the Ashram hilltop. Swami Ji had also established one more Ashram at Hushoora, near Badgam. His selection of places and his architectural tastes were superb.

While it is difficult to recall all the miracles attributed to Swami Ji, an effort will be made here to mention only a few. Some cannot, however, be narrated as it is neither possible to write about them nor mention about them to any, howsoever near and dear he may be.

At Sopore, some time in 1960-61, when Swami Ji was living in a temple, a poojari came to him screaming that his wife had died. Swami Ji took pity on him and told him not to shout but go to the nearby river Vitasta and bring one small tumbler full of water. When he came back, he was told to sprinkle some water from this tumbler on the face of his wife. After doing exactly as he was directed, he found that after a few minutes, his wife came back to life and is said to have lived longer than her husband.

On another occasion, one of Swami Ji's ardent disciples passed away. While his body was being bathed, he suddenly woke up to the chagrin of people around him. They were virtually frightened to see the dead person coming back to life. The dead devotee, back in life, told them "please, don't be afraid of me, give me some clothes to wear, I will narrate to you the reason of my revival" which he later on did. But since such revelation was not ordered by Swami Ji, the devotee lost his power of speech even though he survived for a long time. This miracle has happened after Swami Ji had attained *Nirvana.*

Once before leaving for Delhi, Swami Ji stayed at Jawahar Nagar in the house of a devotee. When the 15-year old son of the devotee bowed before Swami Ji as usual in the morning, a thought flashed across his mind that the photograph of Lord Shiva adorning the wall was just a fiction. Swami Ji understood the boy's inner thoughts and threw an innocent smile. During the night, when the boy went to bed in his room, where his cousin also slept, at dead of night he suddenly opened his eyes on seeing flashes of light having engulfed the room. Unable to stand the glare, he tried to cover his eyes and head with bed sheets, but the glare flashed even through the sheets. Ultimately, he got up and to his surprise, found Lord Shiva sitting and smiling on a chair with trillions of lights surrounding him. After some time, everything came back to normal. In the morning, he went again to Swami Ji as usual and paid his obeisance at his feet; Swami Ji smiled and asked him whether there was any sense in Lord Shiva's photograph now. The boy prostrated before Swami Ji and begged for his mercy.

Yet another incident concerns one of Swami Ji's devotees working in Revenue Department at Handwara/Sopore. He was to be sentenced for some of his misdeeds and misappropriations by the court. A day before the judgement was to be pronounced, he came to Swami Ji's Ashram and begged for mercy. Swami Ji drew a long puff from his *chilum* following which a big flash of fire appeared. Swami Ji told him to calm down and forget his worry. To the devotee's luck, the concerned court premises were suddenly engulfed by a ravaging fire, with the entire building and court records being reduced to ashes, thus giving him a reprieve for life.

A Pandit police office posted in Kupwara used to visit Swami Ji's Ashram in Tikker occasionally after retirement. One day, he had suddenly to be rushed to SMHS Hospital in Srinagar in a very serious condition, accompanied by his wife and some relatives. While the relatives left, his wife was alone in the hospital attending on her husband. During the night, the patient suddenly died and his wife cried and screamed. After confirming that the patient had died, doctors shifted the dead body surprisingly showed signs of life to the utter bewilderment of his wife, who was not prepared to accept the fact of a dead body coming back to life. She was convinced that some evil spirit had overtaken the body of her husband. Watching from a far off distance, she observed the movements of her husband who waived his hand beckoning her, but she refused to go near him. At that moment, a relative arrived early in the morning with some medicines, and to his utter surprise, saw the body lying outside and came to know from his wife about all that happened during the night. The wife was so frightened that she did not allow even her relative to go near the dead person. Mustering courage, he did go near the body and the person who was back to life, entreated him to take him back home. "I have been granted new life and shall narrate to you all the details at my home", he said. Fully convinced that the person was really alive, he convinced his wife as well and took him home. On reaching home, the revived person asked his relative to pull out a thorn from his foot. It was removed instantaneously and was found to be actually a nail.

The person was thus relieved of acute pain and agony caused by the nail-like thorn. Narrating his ordeal, he said two persons came to him in the Hospital and took him along with them. He was then taken to a hall, which resembled a cinema theatre. There he saw the entire doings of his life recorded and exhibited before him just like a film, which also featured his presence in Swami Ji's Ashram. After being made to watch all this, he was taken to a hill- top by those two persons flanking him on either side. He was surprised to see from this hill-top two views: On one side there were rich gardens and on the other side dense black forest. One of the escorts forced me towards the forest where the thorn stuck to his foot causing severe pain. And, at a distance he saw his revered Swami Ji puffing the *chilum*. He directed his escorts to take him back and so life was granted to him again, to survive for a long period. The thorn, which looked like an iron nail, was preserved by him till his death.

Swami Ji was very kind at heart and full of love and compassion for his devotees. It is rather difficult to narrate and write about all the miracles that occurred in his life time and continue to happen with his devotees even after his *Nirvana*. I am reminded of only some incidents that took place in my presence at his Tikker and Hoshura Ashrams from time to time.

Swami Ji would normally ask his devotees and sevaks in the Ashram to prepare more food as some devotees were on way to see him, be it lunch time or dinner time. I have normally seen more than 15 to 20 persons daily having food in his Ashram both in the morning and evening. The Ashram langer was always open and free. He would never accept a penny from anybody nor would he like very important persons to visit him. He shunned exposure and never used his unlimited powers to impress others. His life was scrupulously clean like the nature he loved. One of his disciples, Jai Kishan by name, one day suddenly thought of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar and wanted to know who they were. One evening when the sun had set and the moon was at its zenith, he heard Swami Ji calling Baba Ji (Vibhishan Ji) and directing him to bring some tea for the guests sitting with him. Vibhishan Ji at once brought tea in Samawar with Jai Kishan accompanying him with Khosoos (Cups). Three old Pandits, 80 to 90 years of age, sporting white beards and wearing round turbans with long-armed ancient *pherans* were seen chatting with Swami Ji. After they had a few sips of tea, Swami Ji directed Jai Kishan to accompany them upto the road down below, about half a mile or so from the Ashram. In deference to Swami Ji's orders, Jai Kishan accompanied the three old Pandits. When he reached the gate of the Ashram a few yards away from where Swami Ji was sitting, he heard Swami Ji calling him. He just looked around for a fraction of a second to verify whether he was actually being called and when he regained his posture, to his surprise he found all the three Pandits missing. Worried, he ran here and there for an hour or so in all directions in their search but all in vain. During the dead of the night he came back to Swami Ji, a broken man as he was after this incident. Finding Swami Ji all smiles, Jai Kishan was lost as what he should do now. On this, Swami Ji told him, "don't worry, this is an answer to the question that arose in your mind. You have not realised that they were actually the "Trikoti"—Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar".

There is an incident when, as per Swami Ji's wishes, his devotees had even to proceed on world tours. Swami Ji one day asked Jai Kishan if he would like to go on a world tour. Nodding his head in affirmative, Swami Ji told him to make preparations. Unexpectedly, on reporting at his office as usual, he was told that he had been transferred to the security wing in the Prime Minister's office. Normally, a transfer from Civil Aviation to P.M's security wing is rather unthinkable and that too with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She had to visit some countries and travelled by INS Vikrant; Jai Kishan was in the security wing of the Prime Minister.

Swami Ji had prophesied in early 1967 that Kashmiri Pandits were in for a big trouble in the middle of the year. Kashmiri Pandits actually took to streets in August/September 1976 when Swami Ji ordained that a big sacrifice was required to save the community. Swami Ji possessed highest virtues and was secular in his outlook. In Boomai, where Swami Ji stayed for some time, a Muslim by the name of Mohammed Gosain one day saw Swami Ji sitting in naked form with Trishul in hand travelling on the back of Nandi. He immediately became his ardent devotee. Another Muslim came to Swami Ji one day and told him that his cow was not giving milk any more. He was directed to go with a pot to the cow and tell her to give some milk for Nand Lal. He followed the directions and uttered the same lines before the cow while placing the pot near her and she at once started milking.

There is yet another interesting incident in my knowledge. In Hoshura, a young Pandit boy who was working in the Air Force wished to get himself recruited as a volunteer in Congo. Swami Ji asked him, "Congo alone, why not a World tour?" This boy was later selected and given the assignment of a Driver in the army by the Congo Govt. His office was strategically located near the Airport where a number of aeroplanes were taking off and landing. One day, he was deputed on loading supervision and while doing so, he himself by mistake, boarded a plane unmindful of the wrong that he had committed. This flight's first destination was Washington, followed by other cities and its return was after one month. While coming out of the aeroplane, the officials concerned discovered a passenger alongwith the cargo and detained him at the airport. After interrogation, the Indian Embassy was approached. After verifying and ascertaining his identity, he was issued with a temporary passport and visa and kept with the Embassy staff for a week or so. During this period he got a chance to see some parts of USA. Thereafter, he was put on board again; the plane reached Brazil with a halt there for a couple of days and then moved to few other countries, before going back to Congo. While disembarking from the Aircraft, he was handed over a dismissal letter, his dues and a ticket back to India. This gentleman, after "this world tour", came back to India and was serving as a Postmaster when I saw him last.

I would like to mention two more miracles, which happened in addition to the countless I have myself felt.

Swami Ji blessed a lady whose husband had left her and was living abroad. Under what circumstances he came back and could not go back thereafter, was a miracle one is astounded with. This man is now living happily in India with his family. Talking about an incident involving me personally, I was in 1965 appearing in my Matriculation examination in the Physics paper. I had stealthily placed small but thin question-answer series book inside my answer book and thus started copying. The invigilator, becoming very suspicious, came to my desk and started looking at me. In his presence, as is natural, I could not write anything, which made him more suspicious. He at once got hold of my answer book and said, "are you copying?" At that time, I remembered Swami Ji and boldly told him, "no, I am not". He opened my answer book page by page and, to my surprise, I neither saw the book, which I had concealed in my answer book, nor could he find anything objectionable there. He gave the answer book back to me and I once again started copying without any fear. Thereafter, the invigilator never came to my seat so long as the whole examination lasted. After the examinations, it was a routine for me to go to Swami Ji and stay in the Ashram. This time I stayed for more than a fortnight. One day in the morning hours, Swami Ji was puffing the *chilum* and I sat in front of him solely praying for my success in the Matric examination. Swami Ji smiled at me and I bowed my head, feeling a little shy. Then he told me "do you remember when the invigilator checked your answer book: where had that book gone from which you were copying". I had no alternative except to bow my head further in shame. Then he told me as to who saved me and how all this happened. I became deaf and dumb for a moment and could not stand up till he ordered me to get up and bring some water for him to drink. Thereafter, Swami Ji continued to shower his grace upon me and his other beloved ones. As I have mentioned earlier, Swami Ji's miracles continue to take place even after his *Nirvana* insofar as his devotees are concerned. He is omnipresent and always available to guide his ardent seekers.

His Holiness Swami Ji attained *Nirvana* in January 1966 on the day of Gauri Triteya at New Delhi in the house of his beloved *shishya*. Pandit Prem Nath Sadhu at Malviya Nagar. Swami Ji has a long list of devotees whom he had incarnated in his life time and some of whom were incarnated after his *Nirvana*.

Swami Ji had nominated Shri Vibhishan Ji, Kral Bab Maharaj and Mast Ram Ji as his successors. Vibhishan Ji is presently at Bordi in his Ashram, a great soul who has conquered all Siddhis. Swami Kral Bab Ji, one of the dearest chelas of Swami Ji, expired a couple of years back and has an Ashram in Gaddi Udhampur. Swami Mast Ram Ji is extremely busy in spreading the name of his Guru Maharaj and has a great following. His Ashram is in Jammu, Karala, Delhi and at Haridwar. The Ashram at Haridwar has space enough to accommodate as many as 2000 people at a time and anybody can use the premises free of cost for Yatra purposes.

Before concluding I must make a mention about Swami Sedhmol (Vedha Lal). He was a family man who was first incarnated by Swami Ji and given the name of Sedhmol, followed by Swami Sham Lal Jee Sapru, popularly known as 'Bai Toth'. Both Sedhmol and Bai Toth were the senior most disciples of His Holiness Swami Nand Lal Ji Maharaj and both have contributed a lot towards the welfare of our community. Both of them, like their Guru Maharaj, possessed immense miraculous powers and always shunned publicity.

[*The author, has had the privilege to see Swami Ji very 'closely' right from the age of ten years, beginning from 1958-59 to 1967-68*].

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 18

SWAMI SHANKAR RAZDAN

—M.K. RAINA

Kahsmir over the ages has been the seat of Rishis and Munis and saints and sufis. Among them rose, in the middle of the 19th century, Swami Shankar Razdan, a Shiddha Purusha, revered by both high and low. Born in a middle class family at Kania Kadal, Srinagar, Shankar, even in his childhood, had displayed a remarkable Vaakh Siddhi (whatever he said would come true) which startled people around him. As a child he would babble prayers in incoherent words and be absorbed in contemplation. As such he had not much attachment to the family. His father, a revenue official, was posted in Kulgam, an area abounding in natural beauty. Shankar, spent his early days here which brought him closer to nature. The surroundings were in tune with his spiritual make-up and he started his Tapasya in Uttarsu, at a shrine of Umma Bhagwati. He later wanted to shift his place of contemplation to Khirbavani shrine in Manzgam (Kulgam).

On his way to Manzgam, Swamiji encountered a strange phenomenon. All of a sudden dark clouds started garnering overhead and there followed lightning and cloudbursts, thunderstorms and rains which uprooted trees and rocks started rolling down the Vishaw river and along with it was swept away Shankar Razdan. Swamiji being a man of prescience was nut afraid of this extraordinary phenomenon. On the contrary he took it as an indication of some supernatural happening, In a flash he saw the Devi on a rock beckoning to him. The Devi extended a corner of her 'Longi' to the Swami; he caught hold of it and the Devi pulled him to Herself, applied Tilak on the forehead of the Swami and gave him Khir and other Prashad with Her own bands. The Devi admonished him not to fritter away his energies in search of the divine without a Guru. He should go to one of her devotees, Swami Zanardan Dhar of Srinagar, to whose care She had given him, for future. "He will give you *Updesh",* said the Devi, and disappeared.

In a short while the storm subsided, the sky cleared, the sun shone and the Swami found his way to safety. This was a clear indication to the Swami that the Devi to Whom he was going had met him half-way, given him Darshan and confined him to the care of Her ardent devotee, Swami Zanardan Dhar. Lo, no sooner did Shankar Razdan reach Srinagar, Swami Zanardan came out to greet him and since then Shankar Razdan continued to be a Shisha in the service of Swami Zanardan Dhar.

A few instances of the miracles that were performed by the Swami may be narrated here. Once he, along with his other fellow students, was studying at night. There being no other means of lighting those days, they were studying under an oil lamp. The oil of the lamp dried up and the lamp started to flicker. The students felt disappointed because it was not possible to go out to fetch oil at that late hour to refill the lamp. Shankar told them not to mind and the lamp started to light up brightly to the wonderment, of the students. It went on well beyond their requirement. It is possible that it was in remembrance of this event that when a Samadhi was built in the memory of the Swami, it was named the temple of Ratanjot.

There is a saying "Shankaren Makach"—Shanker's axe. Swami Shankar Razdan used to carry an axe with him and worship it. Once at Bijbihara, when asked what was in that axe that he worshipped it, he struck the axe at a huge stone. An axe got stuck in the stone, yet Swamiji's axe continued to be in his hand. It is said that the stone with the axe is still existing.

It was Sawan Pooranmashi, and thousands of people were on pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath cave. The Swami was at his home. He had not gone on pilgrimage. At Amarnath there was a thunderstorm. People were in distress and there was danger of large-scale death and devastation. All of a sudden, Swamiji appeared near the cave deep in Tapasya. The sky cleared and the people were happy at the sight of the Swami. On their return from the cave they did not find the Swami at his place. When they reached Srinagar and narrated their tribulations and mentioned the presence of the Swami there his disciples were puzzled and asserted that the Swami had never stirred out of his hut.

The British had sent a political mission to Central Asia via Kashmir under the leadership of Douglas Forsy. The mission was of great significance because the Britishers wanted to checkmate the influence of Russia in this area and the Begs and other rulers were active and could be influenced one way or the other. The impression was given that it would be a joint mission of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government and Maharaja Ranbir Singh was induced to render all assistance to the mission to meet Yaqub Beg who had formed the short-lived independent kingdom of Kashgharia and Yarkand. Queen Victoria of England was deeply interested in the mission and sent presents to the Maharaja. However, the 'mission did not return for a long time and 'various search parties were sent out to trace it with no results.

The British got annoyed and furious with Maharaja Ranbir Singh and pressed him hard to find the whereabouts of the mission because its loss involved the interests of the State and the prestige of the Queen herself. The Maharaja got worried and stood in the danger of even being deposed. In spite of his best efforts no trace could be found of the political mission. It was suggested to him that he might seek the aid of Swami Shankar Razdan, a recluse living in a hut near Chattabal. The Maharaja finding no alternative went personally to the saint.

The saint at first expressed his inability to do anything but after much persuasion by his disciples and considering the gravity of the situation for the Maharaja he finally agreed to intervene and said that the mission would return in a few days. And, lo, Douglas Fersythe and his party returned. Asked what had happened to them Fersythe said that while returning they had lost their way and had been wandering over rocks and valleys and had been held by some local chieftains. On the intervention of a Kashmiri (giving the description of Swami Shankar Razdan) they had been released and guided to safety. He also gave the same date of his rescue on which the Maharaja had approached the saint. This narration struck wonder in the whole court and the Maharaja rushed to the saint, bowed before him and made obeisance. This incident became known throughout India, even Britain. Since then Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Maharaja Pratap Singh, who succeeded him, were devotees of the Swami.

Once Maharaja Ranbir Singh had paid a visit to the saint in his Kutia. With him was his military attache. The party was offered tea which they most cherished as Prashad from the saint. While offering tea a disciple inadvertently dropped some boiling tea on the shoulder of the military attache, who could not even squirm in the presence of the Maharaja. Swami Shankar Razdan divined the pain that the military attache was undergoing. He rubbed the shoulder of the Colonel for some time and the pain went on reducing in the Colonel's shoulder, but blisters appeared on the shoulder of the saint himself. This indicates that when he relieved the tribulations of his devotees he took all the pain himself.

There are many miracles which Swami Shanker Razdan performed to relieve the distress of his devotees to bear narration here. It was not for any personal benefit or any consideration that he did good. He lived in a small Kutia at Chattabal, Srinagar, and welcomed everyone who came to him, a pauper or a Raja. The Maharaja wanted to build a residence for the Mahatma which could accommodate comfortably him and his disciples. With this end in view he deputed of his engineers to make a layout plan and an assessment of the proposed Ashram. When the engineers went on the site to take measurements and there was some activity outside the Mahatma's Kutia, he enquired what it was all about. When informed by the engineers about their purpose and the Maharaja's wish to build a mansion for his Ashram, he strictly forbade to take measurements and sent message to the Maharaja that if he felt ashamed to visit his humble Kutia he (the Maharaja) had better not come to visit him (the saint). This perturbed, the Maharaja because he was devoutly attached to the saint and he came forthwith to beg pardon for his temerity.

As already indicated above, Swami Shankar Razdan was a celibate and thus had no family. Once a widow came to him with the limp body of a child stricken with small-pox in her arms who, she thought, had breathed his last. She cried and wailed before the Swami and told him that it was her only child who was no more. She implored, him to do something to bring the child back to life. Everyone present was moved by the pleadings of the widow and implored the Mahatma to grant her boon. After some contemplation Swami Shankar Razdan told 'the widow that her son might return to life but she should have to part with him. He offered to adopt the child. The widow, for the sake of the life of her child, agreed readily to have nothing to do with him if he came back to life and the Mahatma could adopt him if he liked. The Mahatma sprinkled some holy water from his Puja on the child who started opening his eyes and making movements. There was great excitement and happiness among the devotees and they fell at the feet of the Mahatma. The child recovered and was named Ramjoo by the Mahatma and adopted by him. He brought up Ramjoo with great care, gave him good education, secular as well religious.

The Maharaja out of consideration for the Mahatma wanted to give a prize post 'to young Ramjoo. But. Swami Shankar Razdan would have none of it. After great persuasion, he allowed his adopted son to take Government service which was the only means of livelihood for Kashmiri Pandits those days. Shri Ramjoo rose step by step to become the Military Secretary in the Government. When it became the settled policy of the British Government in India to place Englishmen in key posts in States, Shri Ramjoo was replaced by one Chamberlain. Even after that Shri Ramjoo held important posts and finally became adviser to Raja Amar Singh, father of late Maharaja Hari Singh.

The Swami lived and died in his humble Kutia. When he attained Mukti the Maharaja got a Samadhi built in his name. It was named Mandir Ratanjot. For the maintenance of a free kitchen at the Mandir, the Maharaja also bestowed a big Jagir and funds from Dharmarth on Shri Ramjoo. This Jagir was taken over by the tenants in 1950 on the orders of the Revenue Minister. A suit was lodged in the civil court for the recovery of the Jagir. The case is *sub judice* in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Though the Mandir is in private hands, it is open to all—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. Everyone in Chattabal reveres the memory of Swami Shankar Razdan. In the temple are placed the personal effects of the Mahatma the axe which he worshipped and the offerings made by the Maharajas and other humbler folk. There are many books the, temple (some in Kashmiri-Sharada) which to be researched upon,

Much of what is written above is recorded history except for the supernatural part which was personal to the disciples and who had profited by his benevolence. This piece is to record for the benefit of those who do not know what spiritual powers our ancestors possessed which they utilised for the good of the mankind.

(Translated from Urdu by L.N. Raina)

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 19

SWAMI SHAKAR SAHIB—THE SAINT EXTRAORDINARY

—S.N. BAKAYA

(Among the galaxy of great saints born in Kashmir Swami Shakar Sahib was probably the greatest one who transferred his soul to a dead child, incidentally his grandson, to bring him back to life. The author, his great-great grandson, gives a lucid description of Swamiji's renounced life of piety and also his miracles—Editor).

The Valley of Kashmir, which was brought to life by Kashyap Rishi, is also known as Raesh Waer — the abode of Rishis. The magnificent place with the Himalayan ranges surrounding it served as the birthplace of many exalted spiritual luminaries throughout its evolution. We may not have historical accounts of each and every seer that the Valley has produced, but some of them, born during the past several centuries, are well known in our community, and even outside. Names such as Lalleshwari, Rupa Bhawani, Nund Rishi, Parmanand, Rishipir, Jeewan Shah, Grata Bab, Shankar Razdan, Bhagwan Gopinath, Kash Kak, Sona Kak, Nandlal Ji and Swami Lakshman Joo are very familiar to almost all of us and many others.

I have had the good fortune of being the great-great grandson of Swami Shakar Sahib, one of the large galaxy of spiritual masters born in Kashmir. It was in early nineteenth century that this master of eminence made a brief sojourn to Kashmir. The description about his life and miracles is based on my life-long culling of facts from various sources — my ancestors, relatives and the devotees still alive.

Swami Shakar Sahib attracted devotees and admirers from all over the valley due to his spiritual excellence and miraculous powers.

He became the comfort and relief for all the needy and aspiring people from all sections of society of different faiths. He visited a number of places and relieved people of their misery and sufferings. He left his mortal frame voluntarily at a young age of 36 years around 1843, leaving his devotees in absolute desolation. After his Nirvana, his devotees continued to pay obeisance to his relics placed in his room at Sathu Payeen in Srinagar. These relics consisted of his pillow, wooden sandals and a thali. His other relic, a cap, was kept at Batagund in Tehsil Handwara of Kashmir and the devotees used to pay obeisance there too. This practice was followed till the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits at the peak of terrorism in January 1990. The relics at Sathu Payeen to be left behind during the 1990 militancy-related terrorism and the subsequent exile of the community. His chief devotee, Master Prasad Joo Koul, who migrated to Jammu from his native village Batagund, was, however, able to carry one of these relics (cap) to Jammu, which he has preserved in the Ashram at Munshi Chak near Gol Gujral. It is gratifying to see a temple erected at this place with a big hall and a central Hawan Kund in such a short time. The cap had been handed over to Masterji's ancestor, late Pt. Nidan Joo Kaul, by Swamiji's chief disciple, late Pt. Shankar Kaul, after Swamiji's Nirvana.

Early Life

Swami Shakar Sahib was born in the Bakaya family at Kanya Kadal, Srinagar, some time during 1805. He was the grandson of Pt. Mukund Ram Bakaya and the elder son of Pt. Keshov Joo Bakaya, who held a decent post under the Muslim rule at that time. Besides Swami Shakar Sahib, he had a second child, Himet Sahib. From a very young age, he used to invite saints and sadhus to his residence and give them food and clothes. A child endowed with occult powers, he sometimes, would walk over the water of ketakul, a tributary of the Vitasta. At other times, he would climb a vertical pole wearing wooden sandals. His parents got scared and worried about their son's these extraordinary feats and planned to get him married so that he could be distracted from such unusual attributes.

Without his consent and at the tender age of 13, he was married to Smt Savi Devi, the daughter of Pt. Dela Ram Kaul (Mandul) an affluent Pandit. After a few days of marriage, Pt. Dela Ram took his son-in-law to Maa Ragniya shrine at Tula Mula to perform a Yagya there. Accordingly, a big doonga was rented and all the members of the family and some relatives went together there. Next morning, after bathing in the nearby stream, Shakar Sahib unfolded his turban for reshaping it on his head. And as a gesture of extreme love for his son-in-law, Pt. Dela Ram took hold of the turban on the other end and began to tie for it gracefully on the head of his son-in-law. Shakar Sahib tried to prevent him from doing so, but the father-in-law would not yield. While unfolding, Pt. Dela Ram found a piece of charas in it. He took great offence and tore his clothes in disgust. In fact, Shakar Sahib used to entertain Sadhus with the charas and nobody was aware of it. When he saw Pt. Dela Ram tearing his clothes, he also tore his clothes and left the shrine in his wooden sandals. Everyone among his in-laws, including the people present at the shrine, failed to persuade him to return. He told them that as the secret was out, he could not remain with them any more. The news spread like wild fire and everyone began to search for him but he could not be located. He was seer going towards Lodhav village on way to the shrine of Maa Jwala in Khrew village.

At Lodhav

Another great saint, Swami Jeewan Sahib, lived in the upper reaches of Lodhav. He kept a fire burning permanently in front of him. Incidentally, he observed Shakar Sahib in his meditation. Opening his eyes abruptly, he told his disciples: "Hurry up my brother disciple is coming. Let us receive him" and proceeded towards the village approach road with the disciples following him. After they walked a few miles, they saw a handsome young man donning a torn attire coming towards them in a semi-trance state. Swami Jeewan Sahib caught hold of the man and embraced him affectionately. After Swamiji came out of trance, he held Swamiji's hand who led him to his Ashram. Offering him a seat by his side at an elevated place, he spoke to his disciple; thus: "Both of us were the disciples of a great saint in our previous life. We were very fond of each other. One day, we both promised to each other that, in our next birth, if we are born in nearby places, we will meet again." And the disciples rejoiced in this revelation. Being elder, Swami Jeewan Sahib left his previous life much earlier and took birth at Rainawari, Srinagar. When he grew up, he began to recollect about his previous life, his brother disciples and their promise to meet each other and was eagerly looking forward to this day. My cousin, Pt. Radha Krishan Bakaya, has told me that the guru of Swamiji was the great saint, Merza Kak Sahib of Hangalgund, Anantnag.

Reverting to what happened at his home, Smt. Savi Devi had suffered a severe shock due to the absence of her husband and fell ill. As her condition deteriorated day by day, her relatives tried their best to locate Shakar Sahib. Finally, they found him at Swami Jeewan Sahib's ashram and implored him to return but he refused. When Smt. Savi Devi heard about her husband's refusal, her condition grew worse and she breathed her last. At Lodhav, both Swami Jeewan Sahib and Swami Shakar Sahib visualised her expiry in their Samadhi and Swami Jeewan Sahib told Swami Shakar Sahib to leave at once to attend the last rites of his wife. Accordingly, Swamiji headed direct towards the cremation ground at Karan Nagar. Her relatives, who had assembled there, led him to the pyre on which the body of his wife was burning. He knelt before it reverentially, made three rounds around the pyre and then asked his younger brother, Himet Kak, to perform the last rites as mother. After Himet Kak performed the last rites, Swami Shakar Sahib left the cremation ground alone.

Wandering aimlessly for a number of days, he reached Batagund village in Handwara Tehsil. During that period, he met Shri Shakar Kaul of Kandi Saidgang, Shri Haider Khan of Batagund and one more disciple whose name and place of birth is not known. These three were his first disciples and remained with him till his Nirvana.

One day Shri Haider Khan went to his home where he found his wife lying dead. In extreme grief, he returned and told his brother disciple Shri Shakar Kaul about it. Shri Shakar Kaul went in Samadhi and told him that his wife was not dead but some woman of the same name had died nearby. To confirm this he asked him to return to his home. When Shri Haider Khan reached home, he was amazed to see his wife attending household chores.

On another occasion, when Swami Shakar Sahib was away, cholera took an epidemic form in Handwara. The villagers flocked to Shri Shakar Kaul and appealed to him to save them from the calamity. He clinched his knife and plunged it into the ground and a fount of blood burst out. Shri Shakar Kaul told the people that Mother Earth had given the sacrifice and the epidemic could never reappear in that area. From that day, there has never been any kind of epidemic in that area. Such were the powers of the disciples of Swamiji and one can only imagine what powers Swami Shakar Sahib himself would have had.

Move to Sathu

Swamiji continued to stay at Batagund for some years. His reputation brought there people from far and wide for receiving his blessings. But one day, he left Batagund and returned to his home at Kanya Kadal. During this period, Shri Himet Kak, who was like a son to him, got married to Smt. Saraswati Devi. People started visiting Swamiji there too. He would touch them and blow a short whiff of air from his mouth to cure them. In between, he made several trips to Batagund, his second resort. After a few years, Srinagar fell in the grip of cholera epidemic. Panic spread everywhere and people in large numbers came to Swamiji and implored him to ward off the curse. It is said that he performed a strange act which subsided the epidemic eventually. He got up, untied his brief (langota) and started unrinating from his Kanya Kadal home up to a house at Sathu Payeen where he eventually settled.

There are two versions regarding the ownership of that old Bakaya House in Sathu Payeen. One is that the house belonged to the daughter of the then Qazi (judge) of Kashmir. When she heard about Swamiji's journey from Kanya Kadal which terminated in front of her house she, herself being of saintly deposition, ran towards him and offered him her house and went to her parents house across the lane. The other is that Swamiji's father had built that house long back. In any case, Swami Shakar stayed there permanently alongwith his disciples until he left his mortal frame. After some time, Himet Sahib and his wife came and stayed with him.

At times, Swamiji went to Devi Angan in Hari Parbat and stayed there with his disciples. One day in August that year he unexpectedly passed away there which led to a great hue and cry. Saddened people, including the ruler of that time, came there to have his last *darshan*. When it was time to perform his last rites, his disciples did not permit it until their third disciple brother, who had gone to Bengal, returned. As a result, they would not allow anyone to touch the body. People tried to convince them that it was not possible for their third disciple to come from such a far-off place soon, that too when he was not even aware of the happening. However, all of a sudden, he appeared as if from nowhere. But as the last rites were to begin, he told the people that, unless Swamiji got up and blessed them all, he would not allow them to perform the last rites. In the midst of these arguments, Swamiji got up as if he woke up from deep sleep and blessed them. He also told them that now he would remain alive for some more time since the "Trinity", i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, had so decided. Thereafter, he returned to his home at Sathu Payeen.

Some time passed by and a son was born to his daughter-in-law, Smt Saraswati Devi, and was named Zanardhan Kak. But as ill luck would have it, the child died of small pox when he was about four years of age. Wailing and weeping, the mother brought the child's body to Swamiji grossly unaware that he was already dead and pleaded for a healing touch to cure him. Swamiji who was with his disciples, knew that the child had expired. Looking around, he asked her to prepare Khichdi and bring the same to him. Placing the child's body in front of Swamiji, she went to the kitchen to cook Khichdi and brought it to him. Swamiji washed his hands, picked a morsel from it and put it in the mouth of the dead child and himself ate another morsel. He fed the child three times and suddenly the child got up alive but instead Swamiji fell down dead. Swamiji thus transferred his soul to his grandson. This happened on Vaishakh Shukul Paksh Dutiya in 1843 when Swamiji was only about 36 years old. This was the last miracle performed by the great saint. His mortal remains were cremated by Shri Himet Kak at the Karan Nagar cremation ground in the presence of people from all religions. The place of his "Samadhi" is still there. Subsequently, a hall was constructed on it but his existence remained confined only to his disciples and admirers in Kashmir due to his short stay in the Valley.

Miracles Continued

When I was 12 years old, I saw my late uncle, Shri Madho Ram Bakaya, take some books from his shelf to dust them off as they were lying there for a long time. Among the books I noticed with excitement one of a bigger size, a manuscript written in Persian in neat calligraphy. After every two or three written leaves, there were a few blank ones reserved probably for a purpose. I asked my uncle about the author of the book and he revealed that Shri Zanardhan Kak had written that book describing the life of Swami Sahib. I felt a keen desire to know about Swamiji's life and requested my uncle to enlighten me about the same as and when he chose.

Once I made a mention of the book to my parents. My mother told me something that was as interesting as it was astonishing. She said: "My father-in-law, late Pt. Zanardhan Sahib, would get up from his bed at the dead of night, take out a piece of charcoal from his firepot (Kangri) and write some verses on the wall. Next morning, he would copy these verses in the book and ask me to brush off the wall with a coat of clay paste to keep it ready for the next night's exercise". Amazingly, the book had appeared through the intuition of my grandfather. It is pertinent to mention here that Swamiji by adopting his younger brother, who was the biological father of Shri

Zanardhan Sahib, became the grandfather to Shri Zanardhan Sahib. My grandfather, Shri Zanardhan Sahib, was also a portrait painter and it was probably with this idea that he had left some pages in the book blank to project the pictorial idea of the verses. A Bakaya family of Multan in West Punjab, now in Pakistan, had somehow come to know about the book. They came over with the intention of translating and publishing the book but my uncle would not part with it. After his death in 1944, the book could not be traced. It was either stolen, destroyed or given to some unidentified person. Thus a treasure was lost.

The room where Swami Shakar Sahib used to live in Srinagar was converted into a Pooja room by my grandfather after Swamiji's voluntary "Nirvana". We used to worship his wooden sandals along with some idols in that room. When someone had a problem, he would come and tie a length of unspun red thread to one of the legs of the wooden bed and he or she would get relieved of the problem. I have seen elderly persons of different religious faiths bow below the window of Swamiji's room where his relics lay while passing through the lane. In our family, when anyone got married, the newly wedded couple would be brought to the room and seek Swamiji's blessings.

I would like to relate some instances by which Swamiji's spiritual power came to be known even after so many years of his departure. One of my aunts, married in the family of Padroos at Bohri Kadal, Srinagar, once talked to me about Swamiji, when I was 14 years of age. She had gone to the pooja room in the Sathu house twice when she was very young and a both times she had seen a charming snake with a golden hood sitting in a coiled position on the bed. In panic, she ran away and disclosed what she had seen. She was told not to get scared because they already knew about the friendly snake who used to drink milk which they served him. After drinking the milk, the snake would disappear. They held the brief that Swami Shakar Sahib was giving Darshan to them in this form.

Another interesting incident was revealed to me by my mother. When my father and my uncle constructed a new house adjacent to the Bakaya house about 90 years ago, my uncle, Shri Madhu Ram Bakaya, thought of shifting the "pooja" articles to the new building. So my mother was told to transfer all these articles and the idols to the new house and put them in one of the rooms marked as "pooja" room. Most reverentially, she transferred every single article to the new room and arranged them neatly. Immediately after that, my mother got some swelling and pain in her arm, which could not be cured by any medicine. Besides, other members of the family also started feeling ill. My uncle, who had ordered the relocation of these articles, also fell ill. Being a Dharmath official, he consulted learned Pandits who used to visit him. They advised him to move all these articles, including the idols, back to their original place. My mother was instructed accordingly and she went into the old house and, with swollen hands, washed the pooja room and sanctified it with clay paste and also replaced the items at their own places. After she finished the task, her arm was back to normal and the pain had vanished. Other members, including my uncle, were also cured of their illness.

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 20

THAKURJOO MANWATI : POET-SAINT OF KASHMIR

—JAGANNATH (GASH) MANWATI

Having weathered 84 years of my life, I am the last living member of Manwati clan who has had the honour of having lived about 15 years of his life concurrently with revered Thakurjoo Manwati, my first uncle.

A perfect householder, 'Baijigur', as we used to call him, had two sons and two daughters. His elder son Late Sarwanand was issueless and his second son Late Vedlal was not blessed with a male sibling, so I filled the vacuum and became the pet child in the family who used to tuck himself along 'Baijigur' for nearly seven years of my formative and impressionable age till he attained his Nirvana in 1929. It is perhaps 'Baijigur's grace that I vividly remember many eye-witnessed episodes of his life without the lime-lag effect.

A teacher by profession, Thakurjoo had acquired the degree of Adib Fazil, an Honours in Urdu, on the basis of which he was, perhaps, appointed a teacher in a government primary school. But he had mastered Sanskrit, Persian and even Arabic on his own volition which helped him in the deep study of the Vedantic scriptures, the Quran and the Bible. He was a voracious reader, a prolific writer and an impromptu composer.

Thakurjoo's services took him from village to village, his longest posting being at Sopore. Not much is, therefore, known about the earlier years of his life. However, towards the fag end of his career, he was transferred to Gurgari Mohalla Primary School in Srinagar.

It is said that Bawa Balwant Singh, the then Inspector of Schools, reportedly an awesome and disciplined officer, on his couple of annual inspections to this school found always 'Alif' ,the first alphabet in Urdu, written on the blackboard of the classroom. On a subsequent inspection, he made a caustic remark, "Masterji, I find you and your students are still on 'Alif even after three years." Masterji with all humility, which was the hallmark of his character, explained for more than half an hour the esoteric meaning of the alphabet. The inspector was flabbergasted and apologised for his sarcastic remark and simultaneously offered if he could do anything for him. Masterji pleaded that he should not be transferred from the school till his retirement, because it is here that I have merged with Alif.

Recently I saw a poem composed by my daughter-in-law. I reproduce an extract of the poem which is pertinent in the context and perhaps a quintessence of Thakurjoo's explanation of 'Alif'.

अलिफस त् एकिस	Be it Alif or call it Cardinal One
सार वुछुम कुनुई	It Represents Cosmic Oneness
सुई वुछुम अल्लाह	Its Manifestation of 'Allah' and
त् सुय आदिदीव	'Adidev'
अनिफनि लटि रोस	Whenever I ventured to Walk
यलि पोकुस	Without the Staff of 'Alif'
ओन ज़न, कुनुई ज़ोनये!	Like a Blind I was Lost in the Universe

Like Mahatma Gandhi, in his post-retirement years, Masterji used to organise evening prayer meetings at Dewan Bagh—now Karan Nagar, where people from all walks of life and strata used to assemble to hear his discourses in which he used to quote profusely from the Gita, and the Bible.

A strict vegetarian, 'Baijigur' was no advocate of rituals or dogmas. There was no traditional 'Thakur-Kuth' (household pooja room) in his small dwelling. A room strewn and stacked with books in the house was his 'Karma-sthan', where he would be immersed in the books and often lost in deep pensive moods. He firmly believed that the Supreme Lord lived within everyone and search for Him outside was an exercise in futile.

ज़ान ज़ानी जान छु पान पनुन
छुय नो च़्य केंह छाँडिथ अनुन

(Your body is the repository of all Gyan (knowledge). You have'nt to look for it outside) (Often at his prayer meetings, he would exhort people to keep clean their mind/conscience of worldly dirt and dust.

दिल साफ थवतो आईसै
मल गाल तुल तस ़च्य खय।
छ़ोटय पाऽठय यि कथ मटि ह्यतो।

(Keep your mind sparkingly clean.
Divested of dirt and rust
Accept this, I say, as the essence of life)

It is sad that the original manuscript of 'Amrit Sagar', a collection of his 200 and odd poems, mostly in Kashmiri, unfolding the subtleties of Spiritual Truth, based on his personal experience, is not traceable.

Each poem had on the top the 'Raga' mentioned on which it was based and metered, which gave insight into his knowledge of *Shastriya Sangeet.* Often he would correct Govind Baba, a musician disciple of his if he would commit an error in putting a certain poem to particular raga.

There always used to be gathering of religious scholars, medicants and sadhus coming from distant places like Banares and down South having discussions and deliberations on divergent features of metaphysics. Though the pecuniary position of the family was not that bright, yet there used to be 10-12 persons there daily who would partake food at his place. Lest this would earn a frown in the family, Masterji would often remind.

यथ वाँगजवारिस मंज
चुॅ ति पोंछ त् बुति पोंछ
दय सुंजुय बोज़यि दयगथ
न् त् पऽछ़िस पोंछ़ स्वयोव कयाह

(How can we, who are ourselves
Guests in the world
Claim to play host to one another
When the fact remains,
It is His Grace which ensures
Victuals for us all.)

I remember there was a big earthen pitcher kept outside his room which used to be filled with fresh water on each Sunday morning. Thakurjoo would put his hand and stir the water reciting some inaudible mantras. This water used to be sought after by people of all faiths coming from far-off places like Baramulla and Muzzafarabad for treatment of malaria which was quite prevalent in those days. Sunday was called 'Aushadi Day' in the household.

Some six months before Masterji attained his Mahasamadhi, he bade a tearful farewell to his pet cow 'Parvati' and sent her to Sopore wherefrom she was brought. The incident of the cows departure created a sort of commotion in the house. When my father enquired about it, 'Baijigur' said : "Why grieve? Parvati has gone to her home, soon I shall depart for mine "ज़ट गयि वन्य स्यठा प्राणिय" (These mortal remains are now tattered beyond repair.) Some time later, a carbuncle appeared on his stomach which proved fatal.

This humble teacher has attained venerable status of a Guru and the aroma of his preachings had mingled with the air of Kashmir. No wonder then that on the day of his Mahasamadhi, right from his residence at Gund Ahalmar, Srinagar, to the cremation ground at Dewan Bagh, all the shopkeepers downed their shutters and joined the funeral procession with Raghunath Rathi—the famous bard of the times leading the Viman procession singing his poems.

Later, portraying the mood of the people on the day of Mahasamadhi of the poet-saint of Kashmir, Rathi wrote an elegy, paying his tributes to Thakurjoo Manwati which became a household 'cry' in Kashmir.

रयॅत ओस आशिद सन् नोरि नम नमथ
लूख आसि करान चित् गथ
लोलुक ओश तिम त्रावान आसी
ठाकुरजुव गौ स्वर्गवाऽसी

May the nectar of Thakurjoo's preaching keep the celestial fire burning in all the hearts.

(Courtesy Kashur Samachar)

CHAPTER 21

SWAMI ANAND JI MAHARAJ OF VILLAGAM

—J.L. NEHRU

Swami Anand Ji Maharaj has proved to be a magnificent guru among the gurus as defined in Kularnava Tantra.

"Many are the Gurus who are proficient to the utmost in Vedas and Shastras; but rare is the Guru who has attained to the Supreme Truth; many are the Gurus on earth who give what is other than self; but rare is the Guru who brings to light the Atman; and rare is the Guru who removes the disciple's afflictions. Again rare is the Guru who is devoid of all volition to find. He is the Guru by whose very contact there flows the Supreme."

Paying obeisance to God Ganesh and to my esteemed Guru Swami Anand Ji Maharaj I have mustered courage in a difficult situation to portray a small fraction of His life and work after seeking permission of Pt. Shamboo Nath Dhar, Gund Gushi, Distt. Kupwara, Swami Ji's blessed disciple presently putting up at Jammu after migration. The permission was necessarily to be sought as Swami Ji had never allowed any publicity. He was not a believer of ostentatious popularity. His disciples offer prayers in a small "Ashram" in Jammu and perform daily Puja. He would advise his disciples to elude anger, arrogance and wicked persons. Although the living generations happen to know Him in perfect Guru "Swaroop" but to keep him living in the hearts of the generations to come which He is always; indepth desire was felt to portray some aspects of this great saint. Swami Ji was called with affection Bab Sahib. The life of Bab Sahib as wide and deep as the infinite ocean in which we can dive deep so as to take precious gems of Bhakti. The stories are wonderful and give peace and happiness to those who are afflicted with distress and heavy miseries of this material world. His teachings and His divine facial impression shall remain carved ever in our hearts. Although physically weak but always with a smiling and divine radiant face. Bab Sahib was always calm, serene and throughout unostentatious. He was always free from anger, and very soft-spoken. Almost all people who came into touch with Bab Sahib got deeply influenced by his spiritual attainments.

Early Life

Bab Sahib's birth anniversary falls on—Asvin Krishan Paksha Dwadashi and death anniversary on Saptami of Ashad Shukla Paksha. Bab Sahib's father Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat, literate in Persian and Urdu originated from Vaskura Sumbal, Kashmir and had migrated later to Villagam, Distt. Handwara, Kashmir in search of his livelihood where he started his career as a teacher. He got married to Pt. Savram's daughter who was graced by Deity Nandkishore of Sumbal Asthapan. Deity Nandkishore came in dream to Pt. Raghav Ram which turned true. The Deity directed that He would come to Villagam to avoid their frequent coming to Sumbal Holy place. Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat had six sons and two daughters. Bab Sahib was his fourth child and remained a bachelor. Bab Sahib's mother would draw her hair open and get into ecstasy number of times obviously the Deity entering her body. She would thus speak differently. Deity Nandkishore appeared on the willow tree branch in Villagam situated on the river bank. It was "Chetra" Purnima idols of Deity Nandkishore and Shivlingam were installed. A Yagna was performed on this day. Bab Sahib constructed a temple there and after a few days a spring oozed to everybody's surprise. This spring has green waters Bab Sahib started performing annual yagna thereafter.

Shifting to Srinagar (Kashmir)

The exact year is not known when Bab Sahib came to Srinagar with the aim of seeking employment and got engaged in Pt. Dina Nath Dullu's house at Karan Nagar, Srinagar. Pt. Dina Nath Dullu was working in the forest department. Years passed by Bab Sahib had dedicated himself to spiritual activity not known to anyone in the house though being so close to everyone. He had been travelling on wooden Khadaon (Kashmiri wooden sleeper) in the mid-night to "Vichar Naag" nearly 10 kms away for twelve long years and would be seen in his room in the early morning hours before dawn. Once Pt. Dullu Sahib felt thirsty in the mid-night and requested his wife to bring water from kitchen. As the right time had approached now Mrs. Dullu while drawing near to the kitchen where Swami Ji's room fell on the other side got horrified to find that violent fire had engulfed Bab Sahib's room. Immediately crying for help she went to her husband's room and her husband got up quickly and rushed towards Swami Ji's room. He found to his surprise an immense dazzling divine light in Swami Ji's room. Next morning in the early hours Pt. Dullu Sahib fell on the feet of Bab Sahib and made obeisance. Bab Sahib to avert the exposure of the truth accused Mr. Dullu that he had perhaps fallen prey to some evil spirit which had made him to speak irrelevant. He asked Mr. Dullu that he should approach some learned Brahmin who would treat him by reciting some Mantra. How could Pt. Dullu believe it who had to his amazement seen divine radiant light. Bab Sahib's divinity got spread in the family circles and around.

Bab Sahib performed Yagna at Vichar Naag and invited Dullu's family as well. Dullu's family came to know that day that Bab Sahib had been going to Vichar Naag for twelve long years which was kept secret.

Pt. Shamboo Nath's Contact

Pt. Shamboo Nath Ji Gushi, Kupwara, Bat Sahib's close disciple came into his contact in the year 1957. Pt. Shamboo Nath working as Senior Laboratory Assistant in the A.S. College, Srinagar attached to Prof. Kilam was residing with him in the "Stone House" at Karan Nagar. He had lost his wife sometime back and he would normally weep bitterly also start playing with iron "chimta" to the extent that once Prof. Kilam's daughter had termed him as a partly insane man. In fact Pt. Shamboo Nath Ji was in search of Guru to lead him to the path of spirituality. Once walking through Char Chinar near the National High School building in Karan Nagar we saw to his surprise an idol of Lord Vishnu seated on the window of the Bab Sahib's room. When Pt. Shamboo Nath went towards Dullu's house and entered Bab Sahib's room, he did not find any such idol there. Pt. Shamboo Nath fell on the feet of Bat Sahib and wept bitterly. He asked him whether he would like to remarry to which he replied in negative Bab Sahib advised him to have some daily ritual; and recite some Mantras.

Shifting to Khir Bhawani

Bab Sahib spent nearly 40 years in Dullu's family including 10 to 12 years after the spiritual exposure. He then shifted to Khir Bhawani an exotic holy place nearly 25 kms. from Srinagar in the year 1967. There he started putting up in the first floor of Shri Gwash Ram's small house, rather a shopping complex type facing the Goddess "Raginya" and the spring temple. On every Ashtami and Purnima Bab Sahib would perform Puja on a grand scale with various offerings in the Holy Spring like Milk, Flowers and Kheer etc. Many of his disciples have observed that at time of offerings an image of "Devi Chakra" would get formed and start swinging obviously Devi's blessings. A good number of pilgrims and other people who would throng the Khir Bhawani Shrine would have meals at the Bab Sahib's abode. This "NAVEED" would give bliss to the Bakhtas.

Miracles and Telepathic Powers

Death of Elder Brother Shri Parmanand Ji

Once a message got spread that Bab Sahib's oldest brother Shri Parmanand had expired but miraculously had revived to life as a surprise. When Pt. Parmanand Ji regained consciousness he started speaking in a different language not understood by common people and would never stop. Bab Sahib although being younger to his brother, reprimanded him to put a halt to these mutterings. However, Pt. Parmanand narrated that when his austral body was taken to Lord Yama's abode, he found Bab Sahib as well sitting in one of the judgement seats with bowing, head apart from "Chitra Gupta". Pt. Parmanand Ji made a sort of complaint about his younger brother that He behaved in a manner as if He had no relation whatsoever with him. Bab Sahib reacted and uttered that only good "Karmas" are viewed and not the relations there.

Rescuing Aeroplane Piloted by Rajiv Gandhi

Prof. Kilam Sahib's wife was travelling in an aeroplane from Srinagar to Jammu piloted by Late Rajiv Gandhi. All of a sudden some technical snag obstructed the aeroplane and the situation had come to obvious crashing. Bab Sahib appeared in the aeroplane and sat adjacent to Mrs. Kilam's seat, the technical snag miraculously got rectified and the aeroplane had safe landing at Jammu. The crew later came to know as late Rajiv Gandhi had observed that the aeroplane got saved from crashing because of this lady virtually due to the blessings of Swami Ji. Swami Ji was nowhere seen at Jammu in the aeroplane. Here in Srinagar He had asked repeatedly to the C.I.D. Commissioner one of the disciples to enquire whether Mrs. Kilam had safe landing at Jammu. Some days later Prof. Sahib got a letter from his wife narrating the whole incident and the miraculous saving of the aeroplane.

It was in December 1970, when one of the close devotees who was putting up as a tenant in my house at Habba Kadal in Srinagar narrated some facets of Bab Sahib's miracles, divine elevation and spiritual vibrations. I was totally moved as if some inner telepathy started working on me instantly. I became virtually restless to see this spiritual face. Bab Sahib was this time putting up in Tulla Mulla. It was a wintry day but happened to be not too cold. As I entered the hut of the shopkeeper Shri Gwash Ram Ji, I was told that Bab Sahib was on the 1st floor. I entered the room and found him seated in a corner facing Goddess Ragniya's Spring. I paid obeisance and he kept his benevolent hand on my head and blessed me. I got immediately emotional. He of His own said whether I came from Habba Kadal. He untied the knot of one handkerchief and blessed me again by applying a little "Vibhuti" on my forehead and gave me "Naveed" for my family and my parents. The objective in my mind for which I had gone to Bab Sahib got fulfilled to my surprise.

Endless Naveed

One devotee narrated that on one occasion, after offering the last "Ahuti" in Yagna, "Khir" naveed prepared in one brass pot (Deegcha) began to be distributed among hundreds of devotees who had come to attend the Yagna. No one could assess how the small quantity just prepared in one "Deegcha" didn't finish even after having been distributed among hundreds of devotees. Bab Sahib enquired whether all had taken this "Khir Naveed" and the lady distributing it said only one person was yet to take it. Naveed was as such kept in a small Taku (small earthen plate) and the Deegcha got emptied.

I have myself witnessed Bab Sahib after coming out of Samadhi while in Khir Bhawani, having expressed the vivid presence of the Goddess Ragniya. Bab Sahib while blessing all his devotees would always utter let Almighty bloom fortune.

In October 1973, my father took seriously ill and I went immediately to seek my Guru's blessings to know the state my father was going to face and whether he would come out of the trauma. On reaching Khir Bhawani, I was asked by Bab Sahib to perform Puja first in the temple. During Puja, the Dhoop and Diya partly extinguished and I did not take it as a bad omen. When I reached Bab Sahib's room again and with Namaskar prostrated myself under his feet, He, in the first impression, asked what did the Goddess convey and immediately diverted my attention so that my morale does not break. My father expired after some days thereafter, which was a clear indication of Bab Sahib's Divine attainment.

In mid-1996 Bab Sahib came to me in dream twice when I was in extreme trauma due to the ailment of my wife. He untied the knot of his handkerchief and gave me Naveed. He had a divine smile on his face. The doctors had given maximum survival period of three months to my wife but that she survived for seventeen months was a miracle. Prior to her expiry in August 1997. He came again and this time He showed the sign of her end which also came true. This, therefore, evident that Bab Sahib is keeping an eye over the troubles of his devotees.

Last Darshan

It was year 1983 Swami Ji felt indisposed and had developed kidney trouble. The disciples called Dr. Radha Krishan Kachroo to Kilam's house at Shivpora but He was later shifted to Dr. Peshin's Hospital at Karan Nagar in Srinagar. Dr. Peshin had observed the failure of kidney and had tried his best. Normally Bab Sahib's condition never appeared grim even to suspect something serious. He had a smile on His face and appeared in usual trim condition. At around 3.50 p.m. on 17th July, 1983, He left mortal body. He was shifted to Shivalaya Temple premises in Karan Nagar, Srinagar where thousands of devotees had thronged after hearing the news of His attaining Moksha on A.I.R. Kashmir station. The last rites were performed with full Shraddha. When the pyre was lit, single Jyoti rose high to the sky like shooting star. There was a little drizzling as well as having been accepted by Heavenly Spiritual Power. In Shivalaya where thousands of devotees were reciting Bhajans, "Brahma Vidhya" was recited by one person whereas five sounds vibrated concurrently to everybody's surprise.

Immersion of Ashes

Before leaving mortal body Bab Sahib had desired a week earlier that He would like to sit under cool breeze of Chinar Tree in specific referring the place Gushi Kupwara or Khir Bhawani. Where preparations were made to take the Ashes to Sangem at Shadipur Sangam for immersion, the vehicle which these were being carried somehow mystics led the driver to divert towards Khir Bhawani road instead of Shadipur Sangam direct. Here Pt..Shamboo Nath Ji got reminded of Bab Sahib's desire to have a cool breeze under a Chinar Tree. The disciples decided to immerse some ashes in the Khir Bhawani Sangam River. The team after immersing some ashes here left for Shadipur Sangam and immersed the ashes there. Surprisingly again after immersion Devi Chakra got formed on the Sangam waters.

(Courtesy Koshur Samacher)

CHAPTER 22

PANDIT SATLAL SIBOO

—DR. CHAMAN LAL RAINA

Mysterious are the ways of nature which produce vibrations for accelerating the psychophysical potential in the embodied soul. Para-Prakrati is evolutionary process explained in the Kashmir-Shakta school of thought. The 'Bhawani Sahasranama' establishes this fact, which brings co-existence in 'Mood-Prakrati' and 'Mool Prakrati," says a son of the soil of Kashmir, Pandit Satlal Siboo, who was born on the 10th day of August 1902.

Since I was very curious to know the origin of the seven-vibrations which do influence the 'Sapta-Matrikas' during 'Matrika-Pujan', I, in my humble way, met this aged person, wearing pheran, and had the good fortune to hear to his spoken words in his three-storeyed house near Habbakadal (Purshayar). He was in the sixties.

To evolve his spiritual awakening for realising the self, he had taken voluntary retirement from the J&K Fire Services and had engaged himself in Sadhna at his second-floor room, popularly known as 'Kani'. His Sadhna was unique as he meditated upon the Ishta-Devi—Sri Ragniya, in the form of 'Prakrati' and Bhuteshwara in the form of 'Pursha' and then recite the Bija-Mantras.

When asked about this style of Sadhna, he would say: "Sadhna is a process to enlighten every nerve cell through the recitation of 'Bija-Mantra'. These 'Bija-Mantras' form the spirit of Shruti and, through the divine vibration of the absolute, form the particular facet of Devi or Devta." His Sadhna would also include worship of an embossed Sri Yantra in the 'Kadi' tradition as Shakta method was also known to him. , The beauty of Kashmir saints is that they establish Dharma through service to humanity. We have a chain of such great saints—Swami Ramji and Mehtab Kak of Trika Ashram, Nandalal Mastana, Anand Ji of Vilgam, Swami Lakshman joo, Bhagwan Gopinath Ji and others. They showed us the path to reach the goal as the Kashmiri Pandit spiritual psyche flourished on the Vedic teachings and Kashmir Siva-Shakta tradition to understand self.

Pt. Satlal Siboo taught and initiated the Shakta tradition to those who came in contact with him. He would also give Bhasma to ailing persons reciting the Mahamritunjaya Mantra with its Gayitri for many diseases. During his youth he had met Angoor-Bhaba of Angoori Ashram and Dhandi Swami and had excelled in the ancient system of medicine. For some years, he was a practitioner at the Angoori Ashram's Kralakhud branch but during the later part of his life, when he had attained a higher stage of spiritual awakening, he would rely on Mantra-therapy only.

I have the personal experience of his magic touch. I was ailing for many years as I was wrongly operated upon for melanoma. I could not be properly treated at the AIIMS, PGI, Chandigarh, and other institutions. When I returned to Srinagar, I just rushed to him. He asked me to come the next day when it was dawning. Amidst the dawn chorus, I reached his place and found him praying to his Ishta-Devi. Just after his prayers he applied Bhasma on my operated area and recited some mantras. I got completely cured.

This Shakta traditionalist attained Nirvana on the 19th day of Octobers 1987 but his religio-philosophic message is still echoing in the hearts of his devotees. He is also revered in Mukerian (Punjab) and some other places.'

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar)

CHAPTER 23

SWAMI MONI BABA (PREMANANDA PURI) OF BANDIPORE, KASHMIR

—PROF. S. BHATT

Swami Premananda Puri popularly called Moni Baba of Bandipore was among the outstanding saints of Kashmir during the 20th century. He was born in Chennai in the year 1910 or so and attained Maha Smadhi at 5 P.M. on 17 January, 2000 at his new Ashram in Kashmiri Colony, Hiranki Village about 20 kms from ISBT in Delhi.

Moni Baba left his home in early childhood and selected Kashmir, the land of rishis and saints for God realization and sadhna. Based on an interview given by Swami Moni Baba to the present writer, he first arrived in Kashmir at the house of Pandit Man Bhatt in Bandipore, Kashmir in the year 1927. Someone in Rawalpindi had told him to visit and stay in that house as it was an abode of saints visiting Kashmir. In that house he met a great sage, Pandit Tarachand Bhatt, son of Pandit Man Bhatt well known saint of early 20th century and kept his spiritual company until Pandit Tarachand Bhatt passed away in 1951.

Moni Baba established an ashram in Bandipore in early 1940s which is still worshipped in Bandipore these days mostly by the defence forces posted in Bandipore. This ashram is situated on the foothills of Bandipore near the local post office and the hospital. When normalcy returns to Kashmir, this ashram will be again a center of sadhna by a large number of his devotees. It was his desire to develop this ashram so that people from other parts of Kashmir could stay for short visits. Moni Baba used to stay in this ashram for over fifty years when militancy forced him to leave for Jammu and Delhi in 1990. His successor Swami Satchitananda lived with him in the ashram and followed him to Jammu and Delhi.

During Moni Baba's 50 years sadhna in Bandipore ashram, he was worshipped by all Hindus. He also had a large number of Muslim followers. He became a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. He used to go around the town and bless a large number of followers in Bandipore and neighbourhood. He was especially in touch with the saints who visited the house of Pandit Man Bhatt, the saint in Bandipore. These saints included Swami Nandlal Kaul, Pandit Tarachand. Pandit Maheshwar Bhatt and many learned Brahmins of his time who used to visit his ashram or the house of Man Bhatt.

Swami Moni Baba did intense sadhna ever since he made Kashmir his home. During his long and eventful spiritual life, he performed yatra of Amar Nathji 22 times starting in 1927. He regularly visited other spiritual centres in Kashmir like Kheer Bhawani in Tulla Mulla where he met other great spiritual sadhus. He also visited often other spiritual places in Kashmir like Swami Nandlal Koul ashram at Lolal valley, Swami Trehgam's ashram in Trehgam in Handwara Tehsil , and other religious places in Srinagar and Kashmir and other parts of India. He was known as Moni Baba as he kept silence (maun) and did not speak for 17 long years I have memories of this great saint visiting Pandit Man Bhatt's house in Bandipore during winter months full of snowfall when he hardly wore any clothes. His presence in Bandipore used to bring cheer and peace to all. The Muslims used to send rations to his ashram. Among Muslim devotees was late Abdul Kabir Khan, a saint person who was called Jail Baba. He was an MLA also and was close to Mr. Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

Swami Moni Baba was the disciples of Swami Namahshwai Puri who lived in Haridwar and had some eminent people as his followers, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This guru of Moni Baba was the direct disciple of Bhagwan Ramakrishnaji of Belur Math. I remember with great reverence mv visit to Haridwar in the year 1955 along with Swami Moni Baba when we met his guru Swami Nawahshwai who was then nearly 90 years old. He blessed us and like all great seers said that the future is full of promise. One get the impression after meeting these great saints that they possess God consciousness. So was Swami Moni Baba, like his guru Swami Namahashwai. He used to see through your face and give you blessings. We have seen him during his sadhna whenever he visited our house in New Delhi. His eyes were shining when he was in samadhi. Every time he visited our home he left behind enlightenment and happiness. I am sure that many other followers of Swami Moni Baba had similar experience.

Swami Moni Baba gave diksha to a large number of devotees. Among some of his devotees, mention is made of Mr. A.K. Ganju and Mr. M.K. Ganju, the two brothers originally from Sopore, Kashmir who helped Swamiji establish a second ashram in Hiranki, Delhi after he left Kashmir in 1990. These Ganju brothers are great sons of Kashmir who have not only built the ashram for Moni Baba at Hiranki, but rehabilitated nearly 100 migrant refugees from Kashmir, mostly from Sopore, Safapora and Bandipore. Among other devotees, mention is made of Mr. P.N. Sadhu of Greater Kailash II, New Delhi, Major General B.N. Dhar of Jammu, Mr. K.L. Zutshi, Dr. Amar Nath Safaya, who have all served Swami Moni Baba exceedingly well. The family members of Pandit Man Bhatt of Bandipore having moved to New Delhi had constant company of Moni Baba. They organized many hawans particularly in Pamposh Enclave in New Delhi.

Swami Moni Baba ashram at Hiranki, Delhi (Phone 27721855) is a hallowed place as his mortal remains are buried in this ashram as per his will. He was almost 90 years old when he passed away in this ashram after fasting for 53 days when he took only Ganga water. A suitable memorial is being constructed for Swamiji at this ashram where Kashmiri Pandit migrants settled in the colony, and people from nearby villages, perform regular puja. Large scale hawans are performed on gurupurnima day and other religious occasions when a large number of devotees from NCR Delhi come in buses, cars to participate. His successor Swami Satchitananda is also a very erudite scholar of Hindu religious scriptures. He is often invited in Kashmiri Pandit gathering where he gives discourses on Gita and Upanishads, as also about the life and sadhana of Swami Moni Baba.

Swami Moni Baba was a saint like all other great saints of Kashmir. His spiritual power was evident to those who worshipped him. He meditated for God realization for over 50 years and always brought solace and help to humanity in general and to his devotees in particular. He was a symbol of the Hindu-Muslim unity of Kashmir and, as said earlier, left behind many Muslim followers also in keeping with the great secular traditions of Kashmir. Though he has left this world, yet his spirit will always be with us. For Kashmiri Pandits, a journey to Hiranki will always bring spiritual happiness h because here lies buried a great saint of Kashmir and of India of the modern times. The organizers of his Ashram at Hiranki propose to perform annual hawans on January 17, the day he attained Maha Samadhi and merged with Satchidananda Brahaman, Om Tat Sat.

CHAPTER 24

PT. VISHNU RAZDAN

—ROOP KRISHEN BHAT

PROFILE AND PERSONALITY

Pt. Vishnu Razdan also known as Vishnu Joo Razdan and Vishnu Dass was born at village Bugam in Tehsil Kulgam of Anantnag District of Jammu and Kashmir State in 1890. It is said that his grandfather Pt. Gopal Razdan was basically a resident of Safakadal in Srinagar who was posted in the Anantnag District and was married in a landlord family of Bugam. Gopal Razdan's mother was not happy with this marriage and started teasing the young bride from day one. Shortly after the marriage the bride invoked the wrath of her mother-in-law and was forced to desert her in-laws house in Srinagar and return to her parents at Bugam, but not before she gave birth to a son named Narayan Razdan. Narayan was not allowed to accompany his mother. The lady returned to her parents house heart broken and never went back to her in-laws house thereafter. After attaining the age of 16 Narayan Razdan went in search of his mother and stayed back along with her at the village Bugam. Ultimately Pt. Gopal Razdan also returned to the village. Sh. Narayan Razdan was educated and took up a job of Patwari. He was married at Vessu village of Anantnag District and had three sons. Pt. Vishnu Razdan was the youngest of all.

Pt. Vishnu Razdan had no formal education and was given religious education at his home. He studied Geeta, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Vedas. He also read Karima considered to be Bible of those times. Pt. Vishnu Razdan was married in his early age in a nearby village again in a landlord family and had four daughters from his marriage. Although he fulfilled all desired domestic duties, however, he used to spend most of his time in the company of saints and sages. It is said that one or the other pious person would always be there as a guest at his residence. He was a great host. He did not relish eating alone. He would invite one or the other guest to his house. Pt. Vishnu Razdan was a strict vegetarian and stayed so throughout his life. He promoted vegetarianism and condemned eating of mutton by Kashmiri Brahmins. Two of his famous poems *"Himsaphal"* and *"Bhramin Kanya"* are exclusively devoted to exposing several rituals related to the carnivorous habits of Kashmiri Hindus of those days.

Being born in a landlord family he inherited and mastered the intricacies of agriculture and proved to be a great farmer. It is said that people from far off places would throng to his residence for seeking advice regarding various aspects of agriculture and farming. Pt. Vishnu Razdan himself was very brave and healthy who would feel proud, working in his fields. Those days farming was not considered a lucrative occupation and several social and economic liabilities were attached to it. Despite of all odds Razdan involved himself in farming and preferred this occupation over a Govt. employment which he could have inherited from his father.

Pt. Vishnu Razdan was a fun loving, jolly and witty person. There are several anecdotes attributed to him which reveal such characteristics in him. It is said that once he was a guest at somebody's residence. The lady of the house was hostile towards the guests would not welcome them. While serving the food she sarcastically ignored the guest and served food only for her husband. She handed over the plate of food to her son to be passed on to her husband. Pt. Vishnu Razdan realized that he was not to be served by the lady, asked the child very politely to pass on the thali to him to be passed on to his father. After getting the plate of food he straightaway started eating while the lady of the house remained stunned. In yet another incident, it is said that in exchange of labour two of his neighbours were working at his fields. At the end of the day when he visited the fields he found that the brothers had not worked honestly and had cheated him. He was angry but did not express his anger. Next day he himself went to work in their fields. After some time during the day he asked them to point out the direction where Amarnath was situated. While one of the brothers showed one direction the other one showed a different direction. He observed, "How can Amarnath be situated in both the directions." He asked them to be sure and decide who was right. Both the brothers left the fields and started arguing with each other about the right direction of Amarnath. It is said that the brothers spent the whole day like that and as a result not much work was done in the fields. At the end of the day they realized that Pt. Vishnu Razdan has taken the revenge and "*amarnath haavun*" became a phrase which means to deliberately waste somebody's time or to take someone for a ride.

Pt. Vishnu Razdan was a *karmayogi.* While performing the routine duties of *grahast ashram* and shouldering the normal day-to-day responsibilities he performed the religious Karmas as well. He spent major part of his life at the famous shrine of *Barga Shikha* Goddess at Martand near the famous Sun Temple. It was here under the divine feet of the Goddess that Pt. Vishnu Razdan attained enlightenment. He would always remain busy in the religious discourses in the company of eminent saints and sages of those times and most of his devotional poetry was born at Martand where he would arrange *Satsangs,* religious discourses etc. off and on. His Bhajans are very popular in this belt (in and around Martand) even today. He spent last years of his life in salvaging peoples problems preaching *nishkam karmayoga* and spreading message of truth, love and peace.

It is said that during 1953 when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was arrested there was unrest amongst the people of Kashmir which in some parts resulted in large scale of violence. He came out openly on the streets and through his poetry advised people to calm down and remain united and maintain communal harmony. Some of his verses written during that time became very popular e.g. *ahli khalkav akh nasi:hath bu:z:tav pa:si lila sacriy yikavata ru:z'tval.*

Barely a year after that in 1954 on the *Astami* of *Shravan Shukla Paksha,* Pt. Vishnu Razdan attained Nirvana in a very calm and quite atmosphere by engaging himself in a Samadhi and breathing his last in the form *of pranayama.*

CONTRIBUTION AND WORKS

An unfortunate part regarding his contribution is that Pt. Vishnu Razdan would not pen down his poetry himself. He would render it to his friends, relatives, neighbours etc. who would in turn listen, remember, memorize and write it down. This has resulted in loss of a major portion of his works. Most of his work was narrated by Razdan to Sh. Raghunath Koul of Zainapora, Shopian, who worked as an accountant with a wholesaler of village Bugam who wrote it down. The only written manuscripts available are a small booklet *"Himsaphal* and *"Bhagat Prahalad"*. It was very recently that an anthology of his poetry was compiled by his grandson Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat and his wife Raji Bhat and printed under the title "*Leela Sagar*" published by Kashmir Cultural Trust, Jammu, 2000.

As per the contents of this anthology and material available through other sources Vishnu Razdan's poetry can be divided into four major forms :

1. Leela or Bhajans
2. Long poems
3. Vatsun or Songs
4. Humorous Poetry

Pt. Vishnu Razdan's poetry is woven around two traditions of Kashmiri literature. One follows the traditions as laid by Rosul Mir or Habha Khatun and the other one representing the devotional poetry or the love for God as laid down by Lal Ded, Pt. Parmanand and Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan. While most of his poetry revolves around the love for God there is a sizeable portion which expresses love for the world. This portion of his poetry has evolved during early phase of his life. However, more and more he moved towards spirituality the form and content of his poetry also matched his thought process and love for God became predominant and the central message of his poetry.

In the first phase of his poetry he is a poet of *Vastun* although some of his poems are very close to the *Ghazals*. There are dozens of his songs which express love for the world and longing for the beloved. Love in heart remains central in such poems. Love appears to be the aim of his life. This style is predominant in the following verses :

i) *marya matyo mo roz juda* *jan karayo fida volo*
ii) *Vi:ll vanixay veshanay dasan* *chukhna dilas gubar kasan*
iii) *karma lanyuk khur kas chu kasun* *amli panay dava volo*

In this romantic poetry Pt. Vishnu Razdan seems to be influenced by Rosul Mir. He uses the same symbols and similes as used by Mir e.g. the verse given below:

ya:rl mya:ne mokh ha:v jaljal
kyazi ruudukh ratith jangal or yas a:si ashkun baar su kot la:ri madno

His poems entitled *"chaay"* and *"vridavastha"* portray him as a simple worldly man who loves his daily chores.

The devotional poetry seems to suit him very well that's why even in his romantic poetry he seems to be moving towards God. The predominant feature of his poetry is love for God and Bhakti. His poetry has two facets :

1. The colour of Nirgun
2. Sugun or Devotion

He seems to have thorough knowledge of Lal Ded's poetry and her influences on him is reflected in these verse:

hos zan ganDIho:n mas va:las
kuni ka:las band sapnya:
gratIkan'zan khasi pa~:tsa:las
dull gatshnas t:r lagisa:

By choosing the path of Nirgun he joins the class of Lal Ded and Ropa Bhavani amongst Kashmiri poets. Like Lal he also seems to perplexed by various questions regarding the human existence and the cycle of life. That is why he says :

pane kono *chukh panay saran*
sundyun gatsun k :aran kya

While pondering over this thought again and again he comes to conclusion that between a human being and ultimate truth the biggest obstruction is the human ego and pride. That's why he concludes that the whole world is an illusion and is a temporary phase. He is one of such few poets who realizes the hollowness and temporary status of this world. He prefers and preaches to take a dip into the vast ocean of spirituality over the worldly affairs. Like Lal he too besieges God within his own self. To achieve that he advises to keep oneself under control. This is the central ideas of verses given below :

naman dag cham laman laman chamban tI charan firInovanas
vaasnaayi hanz raz zan cham ṇa tshenan manan kornam pagalpan

Pt. Vishnu Razdan lays stress and preaches to follow the path of Gyana, Karma and Yoga to achieve the ultimate truth. For him the path to Bhakti is straight and easy. For him Bhakti means to leave aside all world desires and keep love for God close to your heart and learn for his Darshan and blessings. For this it is essential to enter into Satsang and learn for him. He is certain that his desires will not go waste that's why he says:

padan tal bI maray chan' aasatoti bI karay
vaarI vaarI aar anay tse rus kas bIvanay

He himself follows the same path that's how he is able to say:

tsol kath kosh va:v lolo siryi nyarmal dary lolo

Pt. Vishnu Razdan carried forward the tradition of *Krishna Bhakti* started by Sh. Parmanand. The central idea of *Krishna Bhakti* is that Krishna is the light of God who takes birth to salvage the sufferings of people. So far as a human being remains ignorant about this truth his soul remains covered with *Agyana* or ignorance. This ignorance could be eliminated through devotion to Krishna and thereby invoking his blessings. He himself follows invoking the same path to cut across the worldly *Maya* and to achieve *Nirvana* and *Mukti.* He seeks the blessings of Krishna by surrendering under his feet. While narrating the childhood of Lord Krishna he uses the standard symbols straightaway and sometimes through Yashoda Mata. He also expresses the anguish of Radha and her happiness in and out of the company of Krishna. He prescribes *Satsanga* to attain the blessings of Krishna on the similar terms as *Rasleela* does between Krishna and his Gopinayas. For him Satsanga helps to realize the bondage between Krishna and his devotees. This is superbly expressed in this verse '.

raasas andar nethnani atsav
natsith motsav krishnly yoot
vari bari aanand kari athIvasa
satIsangkuy vikaasly yoot

Touching such heights of devotion through worldly similes is rarely seen in Kashmiri literature. This is one of the matter pieces of Razdan's poetry.

His poems *"karun gatshi pn' pa:nas jay"* and *"siryi nirmal non draav"* remind us of Swami Parmanand's *"amarnath yatra"*, in which the spiritual facts are expressed through routine symbols and similes, which is the greatness of a poet.

Poetry achieves its heights in case it portrays facts and signifies universal truth through common symbols thereby striking the chord with readers/listeners and stirring through their emotions. Such characteristics are abundantly prevalent in Razdan's poetry.

Looking ahead of this world which is mortal and a mere illusion and preparing oneself for the ultimate truth is the central message of Razdan's poetry. This is adequately expressed in the following verses:

(i) *yi chu sansaar sopnI maya*
maa chu neraan soorye
z'on tl marun yun tl gatshun
atl gath oor yoory
(ii) *harl harl karun k'yazi moshroovum*
garI garI karun tro:vum nI za~h
(iii) *sansaar aavlunuy*
yi chu sani khotI sonuy
ath manz aas henay
tse rus kas bI vanay
(iv) *paano koono chukh paanay vetsa:ra:n*
zi:vl sund vun gatshun kaaran kyah

The long poems entitled *"Himsaphal"* and *"Brahmin kanya"* are in the form of "*masnavi*" sonnet. Both are interrelated. These poems bring forth the mystic ideology of Razdan, underlining the fact that even if the greatest sinner after realizing his mistakes surrenders himself before God he can achieve mukti. These poems also expose the hypocrisy of brahman samaj of those times and are a protest against the ritual of *bali* or sacrifice through hapless animals, i.e. *"raaz I kath"* which was prevalent in those times.

While commenting on the poetry of Pt. Razdan, Late Sh. Moti Lal Saqi says "It is said that if a form of literature survives for three years it is considered to be good, in case it survives for 30 years it is considered to be better and in case it crosses that milestone also then it is the most valuable. Razdan's Bhajans are quenching the thirst of the beseechers for more than last 50 years now. The description of Kashmiri devotional poetry will not be complete unless we include the name of Pt. Vishnu Razdan in it. His following Bhajans are worth mentioning here :

i) *paadi kamlantal bI asay karni chani astuti*
ii) *pratakal aav meti ante gash maej*
iii) *ha dayi booz kanay tse rus has bl vanay*
iv) *nandan bI karvo Doshan malav lolo*

Pt. Vishnu Razdan is not afraid of crossing the limits in devotion. He visualizes God in every form. Despite of expressing the ultimate truth through symbols and similes he is able to mix *nirgun* with *sugun* beautifully in the following verses :

rasas andar n'ath nani atsav natsit motsav krishanay yo:t
vari bari aanand kari athavasay satsanga kuy vikasay bo:z

Pt. Vishnu Razdan has also been a staunch devotees of *zagat mata* "the Goddess". Following the Kashmiri traditions of worship of *Shakti Mata.* Unlike other Hindus, Kashmiris worship *Ishta Devi* in the form of *Raginya, Sharika* and *Jwala.* Unlike in the poetries of Swami Parmanand and Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan, devotion to the Goddess forms a major portion of Pt. Vishnu Razdan's poetry. The highest degree of devotion to Goddess is expressed in his most popular leela *paadi kamlan tal bI aasay karni mo:J chan 'astute:*

Main characteristic of devotional poetry is the truthfulness of emotions and Razdan's poetry is the best example of this e.g.

gyanI data mokhi data chakh zagat mata tsI chakh
hi bavaani kar me vaam sed m, khas dim sarswati

He stresses on *nishkam* karma to attain *mukti* or *nirvana.* So far as the cycle of rebirth is concerned there is no difference between *mukti* or *nirvana,* however, keeping in view the supremacy of *aatma* nirvana is different than the *mukhti* as envisaged in Hindu philosophy. But it seems that Razdan is using *nirvana* in the general sense of *mukti.*

Both through his deeds and writings Pt. Razdan emerges a *karmayogi* with strong personality, a saint by nature, a staunch reformer and an illuminary of the philosophy of *nirvana* and *mukti.*

CHAPTER 25

KASHKAK

—M.K. KAW

In the earlier part of the twentieth century, Kashkak was born in the village of Manigam, 25 kilometres from Srinagar. He was married and had children, led the normal life of a householder and earned his bread by tilling whatever little land he possessed.

Initiated into yogic sadhana by his guru Narain Bhan, Kashkak attained siddhi sooner than expected. He became a faqir, a mastana. Meher Baba of Poona visited him and accepted prasad from him. He says in his book 'The Wayfarers' that he found Kashkak ever engrossed in the seventh plane of consciousness.

Kahkak had miraculous powers, of which there are numerous stories. He would cure people of fatal diseases. He never disappointed any visitor.

One day, the parents of an unfortunate youth brought him to Manigam. They had travelled by tonga from Srinagar. The young man had stopped urinating and had now a distended bladder. The doctors had given him up in despair. The parents tearfully entreated Kashkak to intervene, but Bab refused, saying that the ailment was a result of past karma. The parents would not take not take for an answer and went on pleading. Finally, Kashkak relented and said that they could go back; someone else would bear the youth's karma. Hardly had the tonga gone a few kilometres, when the young man stopped it, descended to the roadside and passed water to the extent of several litres. Immediately thereafter, the horse fell down dead.

One day, Kashkak felt pity on an old Gujar farmer who had fractured his arm. The Gujar had pleaded that his entire family would starve if he were prevented from working at the height of the harvesting season. Kashkak touched his arm and it was instantly healed. Another farmer seated there protested against the cure, saying that the Gujar did not deserve Bab's kindness, as he was known for his cunning. Kashkak said that he would have to go through the entire trauma after the harvesting season was over. This actually happened.

Kashkak's predictions were often shrouded in ambiguity. To a query as to when a particular gentleman would get married, he replied, '*Yora gachhith ta tora yith*', meaning after he died and was reborn. The said gentleman remained a bachelor all his life. It is said, that it would usually give replies to the queries of people who approached him indirectly. One had to be very attentive to what he spoke in order to find answers. Once a Kashmiri Pandit family, approached him at Jani when he was sitting on the bank of the river, they were worried about their daughter who had only one girl child born years back and since then had, no issues. They wanted to know whether she would bear any more children. He did not give any direct reply and instead narrated a story in these words: There was a Bata named S.R. He was very hospitable. Once he invited a teacher to dinner and served him with a sumptuous meal. He gave him one spoonful of Khichdi, which he accepted. Then he offered him a spoonful of Kheer, which he refused to take. But how long can he resist and refuse. He will soon accept that also. At first they did not understand the meaning of this tale. After three hours they realised that S.R. was the name of the father of the girl and her husband was indeed a teacher. Khichdi denoted the girl she already had and Kheer perhaps meant a boy. They were happy to receive this reply and in a year's time their daughter got a son. There are many stories like this narrated by many admirers of this saint because of which he was held in high esteem.

Kashkak was a poor farmer. He always refused offerings, whether in kind or cash. He threw whatever was offered into the Sindh river, which flowed nearby. But he displayed utmost hospitality. Those coming from afar were allowed to stay at night and served-a-simple meal of rice, curd, dal and vegetables. He treated the rich and poor alike and never discriminated between a Hindu and a Muslim.

Kash Kak attained mahasamadhi on 17th August 1961.

(Courtesy: G.N. Raina Koshur Samachar, Feb. 1999)

CHAPTER 26

SAGE PANDIT MAN BHATT AND THE BHATTS OF BANDIPORE

—PROF. S. BHATT

This article is about Pandit Man Bhatt, a great sage of Kashmir, about his family, and my own life's experiences briefly, in a village in Kashmir. This description touches upon our past, our social and cultural life, our spiritual values, and our community aspirations of the past. It concerns the history of our bygone years when Kashmiri Pandits were a predominant part of the life and culture of Kashmir.

I was born at my mother's place in Tulamula, Kashmir, (on 17 January, 1931) well over 72 years ago? My maternal uncle, Pandit Srikanth Kaul, lived in Tulamula, a kilometre from the Devibal or Kheer Bhawani. He worked in the State Forest Service and owned a piece of land. His house was full of sannyasis, especially on festival days. I recall my grandmother, Raj Rani, who was so pious and spiritual. She gave blessings to all who sought her grace.

Not far away from my grandmother's place lived a Muslim saint called Akram Saab. My grandmother and all the Hindus and Muslims had a lot of respect for him. Whenever we visited Tulamula, we would pay our respects to this saint. Such was the great harmony between our saints, both Hindus and Muslims My mother Tulsi Devi imbibed a lot of spiritualism, as she hailed from Tulamula.

Our home was in Bandipore, Kashmir, in a village called Kharapore, about 10 kms from the Wular Lake and 3 kms from the Bandipore bus stop and market. Our household was called after my greats-grandfather, **Pandit** Man Bhatt. He was born around 1850 and died in 1929. Pandit Man Bhatt's father. Pandit Mehtab Bhatt, and his brother had moved to Bandipore in about 1830 from Srinagar. Mehtab Bhatt settled in Kharapore and his brother in Ajar. Both established large families in the two villages. Pandit Mehtab Bhatt was a great *yogi* who had practised *sadhana* in a cave for 12 years, at the end of which he made our ancestral house in Kharapora out of logs of wood and stones. Mehtab Bhatt, it is said, was a great rishi.

Man Bhatt was himself a great spiritual person. He attracted a large number of saints to his household. Hawans were performed regularly by him. He was a scholar in Persian language. A group photograph of the family taken in 1925 in Bandipore shows the pious and sage-like group of people not to be seen these days. Man Bhatt had four sons, namely, Damodar Bhatt, Tarachand Bhatt, Ragho Ram and Gulam Ram. This family had in course of time owned lot of landed property in and around Bandipore. Later the family made three big houses to provide for nearly seventy members of this family. The family also undertook contracts for supplies to the then Gilgit Agency. Thus the members of the Man Bhatt family took business and other employment in Gurez, Astore, Bunji and Gilgit during period 1905 up to 1945.

After the partition of India in 1947, Kashmir acceded to India. However, Pakistan sent troops and tribal raiders, and the line of control was drawn near Gurez in that sector. From this line near Gurez to Gilgit, the area came to be illegally occupied by Pakistan. During 1905 to 1945, for over forty years this house of Man Bhatt in Kharapore, Bandipore, provided a home for visiting *Sannyasis,* teachers and those in service from Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir. The eldest son of Man Bhatt, namely, Pandit Tarachand Bhatt undertook all spiritual and other household functions. He was also a great saint and scholar. He had many eminent Muslim friends in the town. He practised yoga for hours, performed havans, and studied Bhagvadgita, Ramayana and other scriptures. He excelled in the fine art of gardening and planted new saplings in the sprawling gardens next to our home. Among the prominent saints who stayed in the Man Bhatt house were Swami Nand Lal Kaul who had his ashram in Lolab valley, Trihgam Swami, a great sage indeed, and Swami Mauni Baba who later established an ashram in Bandipore and in Hiranki, Delhi.

The joint family household of Man Bhatt and later Tarachand Bhatt had a common economic system. Everyone was cared for and educated. Elders were respected tremendously in the then joint family system. It was true of most Kashmiris before 1947. Evenings were meant for joint prayers. Food was served to guests first who were on visits to Bandipore. Many of these included *Sannyasis.* There were large donations to poor people. Men folk also took care of land and gardens. Marriages and festivals were performed with participation of neighbours and relatives.

My father Pandit Radha Krishan was employed in Gilgit as the head clerk in the Giligit Scouts during the period 1935 to 1945 when he migrated to Baluchistan on transfer. During the British Raj his was an enviable assignment having personal dealings with the Mir of Hunza, Mir of Nagar and Mirs of other principalities in Gilgit Agency. He was a tennis champion and endeared himself to all foreigners and Indians. He passed away in 1972 in New Delhi. His colleagues in office included Pandit Ved Lal, Gopi Nath Dhar, Jagan Nath Pir, the lastname was living in Pamposh Enclave aged about 95 when he died. He had a business office in New York as well.

Gilgit, during the period that I recall (1935 to 1943) had about 30 odd Kashmiri Pandit families. They met regularly on Sundays and performed Puja. There was a close kinship among members. They maintained very cordial relations. The womenfolk wore taranga, a headgear used then in Kashmir. Purdah system was followed in public life.

Gilgit was a paradise of a place. It was beautiful, a valley covered on both sides with mountains. River Gilgit flowed through it. The river had clean snowmelt water. Trout fish abounded in it. Fruits like grapes, apricots, almonds, were grown abundantly like wild flowers. The local people called "Bhauta" spoke Shina, the local language. Gilgit has given birth to many eminent Kashmiri Pandits. I spoke with late Mr. T.N. Kaul, former Foreign Secretary, whose elder brother lives in Delhi, was born in Gilgit. The route from Gilgit to Bandipore is one of the most enchanting one in the world. It has halts en route at hill stations so fascinating like Astore, Burzul close to Nanga Parbat, Gurez, Kurugbal, Tragbal, Sonarwani and Bandipore. Many rivers flow in this region, including the Dudh Ganga in Gurez. There are snow-capped mountains and forests. Many routes are full of fruit trees. I travelled along this route on horseback along with my father and his family almost 14 times and recall vividly this remote part of the world, one of the most scenic and quiet places. Many saints and sages have lived around these places. I left Gilgit in 1943 to join higher studies in Government State School, Bagh Dilawar Khan, in Srinagar, Kashmir.

Gilgit town then (1935-1943) was very quiet and attractive. Not even a bicycle was found there then. There was no pollution of water or air. People were very gentle and friendly I studied in Anglo-Vernacular Middle School, the only school then in Gilgit. It had a sports field in front), and River Gilgit flowed by its side. Polo on horseback was common sport in Giljit Even now this game is played with gusto. During the period 1900 to 1947, Bandipore was an important town for trade between Gilgit Agency and the rest of Kashmir, it was a trading town inhabited by about 30,000 people. The Sonarwani River flows near the town. Nearby forests include Vichar Nag which now houses a forest academy. Tragbal hill overlooks Bandipore town. Gurez is about 60 kms away from Bandipore. Our family members consisting of almost 90 members in 1947 are now spread in many parts of India and the world.

The ancestral home of three houses has been burnt recently in Bandipore by militants. The lovely Chinar tree, now 100 years old, planted by Pandit Tarachand in front of our home continues there, reminding of past times and people. The small rivulet flows by the side of our home. Only time will prove if this household can be rebuilt. It is the task for future generations to rehabilitate displaced Kashmiri Pandits in their homes in Kashmir.

To the small Kashmiri Pandit community now spread out in many parts of India and the world, there is some message from our past culture. We need to have community life whatever the number present. Like Gilgit, where 30 families met on Sundays similar periodic meetings of our members will enrich our life anywhere in the world. Even in Delhi, for the past 20 years, we Bhatts from the Man Bhatt family of Bandipore, now about 10 households, meet once a month for puja and lunch by rotation and revive our common bonds. So brothers and sisters can meet in USA, Canada and other countries and continue with our bonds of Kashmiri Pandit heritage. I recall in New Jersey, USA, for example, the Kashmiri Pandit community members meet regularly and keep themselves united. In London, Dr. S.N. Ganju has been successfully keeping community together by holding seminars, musical festivals. Members in Calcutta, Bombay and other places are very active in social matters.

Ours is a brave new world of our times. New approaches are required to keep our community united and alive. There is worldwide movement within our community to keep our heritage preserved as we are among the very outstanding communities of the world. We have produced world class leaders and many poets, scientists and noble saints and sages whose philosophy is a rich source of harmony for our civilization. One has to read the book "*The Kashmiri Pandit*" by Pandit Anand Kaul to realize what eminent places Kashmiri Pandit's have occupied in the history of India. Besides, Kashmiri Pandits have a saintly heritage, like Pandit Man Bhatt of Bandipore, Kashmir as I saw myself had many saintly families in the 20th century. Their spiritual and social life was of a high order. Common bonds united them. The world is in need of such community spirit which makes us happy. Recent scientific research has revealed that large families with common ties are also eco-friendly and produce harmony for the society. Kashmiri Pandits cannot forget the saintly families of Kashmir in the recent past. Some sages like Pandit Man Bhatt have produced peace and enlightenment in Kashmir society. I am sure our society will produce more literature and books on the saintly families of Kashmir.

CHAPTER 27

ISHWAR SWAROOP SWAMI LAKSHAMAN JOO

—P.N. KACHRU

To start with, I venture to draw your attention to a bunch of lectures delivered by the well-known thinker, writer and philosopher named Aldous Huxley. These lectures are printed in a book form titled "The Human Situation". While going through one of these lectures titled "Latent Human Potentialities", my interest was intriguingly invoked by a long passage on page 247; and which here I quote: "There is a text, for example, which is introduced by a dialogue between Shiva the great God and His wife Parvati. Parvati asks Shiva the secret of Her profound consciousness-- the consciousness of 'Tat-twam Asi', of the Thou Art That, the consciousness that the Atman is identical with the Brahman. Shiva proceeds to give her a list of (112) hundred and twelve exercises in awareness which he says are all extremely helpful towards achieving this ultimate consciousness. They are exercises in awareness in every life situation, from eating ones dinner to sneezing, from going to sleep to making love to having dreams to day-dreaming. It is the most comprehensive series of exercises in consciousness that I know of, and it is very curious to find that this immensely valuable psychological discovery has been allowed to remain as same sort of oriental superstition which we haven't bothered about. Now after many years it is coming to the surface and will prove to be of a very great value".

In this paragraph Huxley's reference to "hundred twelve exercises in awareness" led me to the thought of the author's deep involvement with the practice of Kashmir Shaiva Yoga. On trying to probe this secret my job was facilitated by author's footnote to the passage quoted above, it referred to a book authored by a reputed American Zen Master named Paul Reps. Eagerly after hunting out the book titled 'Zen Flesh, Zen Bones', came forth the revelation; and once again I open it up with a long quotation from the book. "Wandering in the ineffable beauty of Kashmir, above Srinagar I came upon the hermitage of Lakshmanjoo. It overlooks green rice fields, the gardens of Shalimar and Nishat Bagh, lakes fringed with lotus, water streams down from a mountain top.

Here Lakshman--joo - tall, full bodied, shining -- welcomes me. He shares with me this ancient teaching from the Vigyan Bhairav and Swachanda Tantra, both written about four thousand years ago, and from Malini Vijaya Tantra, probably another thousand years older yet. It is an ancient teaching, copied and recopied countless times, and from it Lakshmanjoo has made the beginnings of an English version. I transcribe it eleven more times to get it into the form given here. Shiva first chanted it to his consort Devi in a language of love we have yet to learn. It is about the immanent experience. It presents 112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness. I see Lakshmanjoo gives his life to its practice".

Besides Paul Reps's re-relating of hundred one of the zen stories, there appears the account of his visit to Kashmir. There in the 'Ishwar Ashram' he learned the pre-zen text 'Vijnyana Bhairav' the great text of Kashmir shaivism. In his short but profound paraphrase of the book, the yogic practice termed "centering", and as expressed and interpreted by the Great Master and Saint who introduced him to the great scripture. Not only this, glaring notices by international scholars appeared regularly, acknowledging their indebtedness to the Shaiva Master.

Among the Western Scholars of Shaivism who spent times studying with Swami Lakshmanjoo were the French scholar Lilian Silburn and her colleague and well known author Andre Padoux, both of whom had a distinguished career as scholars at the centre National de la Recherche Scietifique, Paris. Alexis Sanderson, the Spaulding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University, and Mark S.G. Dyezkowski, an important Polish scholar of Shaivism associated with Sampurnanand Sanskrit University all of them were the students who regularly visited the Ashram and studied at the feet of Swamiji. Other scholars, who made their, regular pilgrimage to Swami Lakshmanjoo's Ashram, include Professor Harvey P. Alper, J.G. Arapura, Bettina Baumer, Gerald J.Lasrson and K. Sivaraman. (In addition to this, in India itself Swamiji was held in high esteem by distinguished scholars, many of whom journeyed to his Ashram for seeking more profound knowledge of Shaiva doctrine and practice. This section of pandits included Acharya Rameshwar Jha, whose profound intellectual achievements could not provide the spiritual liberation which dawned upon him instantaneously through the first glimpse of the Master, while stating to Rameshwar that "who knows, whether I liberate you or you liberate me!". The ecstasy resulted in tribute to his Master through the poetic Sanskrit classic called the Gurustuti. Pandit Jha's "Hymn to the Master" (गुरुस्तुती) is filled with exposition of effulgence of Liberation. He cries thus:

येन मानमितिमेयभानतः
संनिवर्त्य निजवैभवे शिवेः
स्थापितोऽस्मि कृपयावलोकित–
–स्तं नतोऽस्मि गुरूमेव लक्षमनं।।

"I bow to my Master who with his favour, has freed me from the shackles of "theorems", "proofs" and "results", and has placed me in His own glory of Shivahood," Or again in through his ecstatic exclamations he burst out thus:

"Hail to that mystical and graceful flowering that emanates from the moon-like toe-nails of Sadguru, which illuminate the ignorant, and enables him to see all objects full of Shivahood.

Thakur Jaidev Singh spent years in the Ishwar Ashram for seeking Knowledge at the feet of the Master; and under His guidance translated the texts of Shaiva shastras and the commentaries thereupon by sage-polymaths like Utpal Dev, Jayarath and Khemaraj. He regarded his Master "the doyen of Saivagama"; and while his stay there Thakur would follow his Master word by word over the texts before submitting them for publication.

The yearly pilgrimage by reputed scholars like Gopinath Kaviraj and Pandit Navjeevan Rastogi of Lucknow University and of Abhinavgupta University of Shaivism and Aesthetics, were annual features to seek grace and knowledge that bore the unique fruit of projected eleven volume English version of Tantraloka.

Acharya Parmaharnsa Mishra of Benaras Hindu University had the Deeksha and grace from Swamiji that bore for the first time, the fruit of eight volume Hindi version of Tantraloka along with the commentary there upon by Acharya Jayaratha. In the very start of the first volume in the Preface, the author, while paying obeisance and tribute to his Master Lakshmanjoo, and to the author and commentator, he writes:

महामाहेश्वर (अभिनवगुप्त) के दिव्यतम रूप के स्वप्न मै दर्शन, साथ ही पार्श्वभाग में वज्रासन पर विराजमान माहेश्वर सिंहासन के समक्ष ही ओज–ऊर्जस्वल राजानक जयरथ के दर्शन, तथा *श्री ईश्वर आश्रम, गुप्तगंगा, श्रीनगर, काश्मीर के महामाहेश्वर महामनीषी त्रिकदर्शनसुधा के आधार कलानिधि अद्युनातन महामाहेश्वर लक्षमन जी का दीक्षा वरदान मेरे दार्शनिक जीवन के शैव–सन्दर्भ हैं, जिन से मेरा स्वात्म सन्दृब्ध है।*

"Dreaming about the spiritually effulgent countenance of Mahamaheshwara, the Shiva-incarnate Abhinavagupta, and also having the glimpse of the brilliant personality of Rajanka Jayaratha flanking nearby in Vajrasana; and with the initiation and grace of the great thinker, the foundation and nectar of Trika philosophy and the fund of artistic creativity, the present-day Mahamaheshwara Lakshmanjoo of Ishwar Ashram Gupta Ganga Srinagar—are the basis of my Shaiva Philosophic life and the foundation of my inner Being".

Silburn did many important translations and studies of Kashmir Shaiva shastras, including "Kundalini: The Energy of Depths," (State University of New York Press, 1988). In doing so, she studied with Swamiji over a period of twenty years. During that period she regarded Swamiji as her master in the science of Bhairava (Mon maitre end Bhairavasasana, 1961). "In 1948", Lilian Silburn writes about her first visit, "I journeyed to India for the first time and met Swami Lakshmanjoo in Kashmir. I received from him help in understanding Shiva-Sutra, its commentaries, and also the Spandakarika and the Vijnyana Bhairava, which I had attempted to translate. That year I lived near him in an abandoned hut of beaten earth on the uninhabited hills that dominate Dal Lake. The often hazy stillness of the lake joined together to create a harmony and a peace that was profound, yet pregnant - it seemed - with the presence of great Shaiva masters who probably frequented that place".

The most vivid description of a scholar's encounter with Swamiji comes from the description by the Polish scholar Dyezkowski who spent good time with Swamiji in mid 1970's. "Swamiji would rise early in the morning and we, his western disciples, would come and share, as best we could, in Swamiji's immense profundity. His exposition of the great works of ancient Kashmiri masters would fill us with wonder". Continues Dyezkowski: "He was an immense inspiration to me as a living example of Kashmir Shaivism in practice". For all disciples of Swamiji, he was much more that the Shaivic scholar. He seemed to be a great adept even while giving his expositions to scriptures. "Somehow he sees much more in them" (books) reports Dyezkoweski, "than could ever be grasped through mere bookish knowledge and we could all feel that behind his words lay another dimension beyond them in which he lived and from which he beckoned us to join him"; ("Doctrines of vibration" by S.G.D, State University of New York Press, 1992). While supporting Silburn's estimates of Swamiji as a yogin and jnanin (realized sage) as welt as a great scholar, Bettina Baumer describes him as "the only living representative of the full Kashmir Shiva tradition, both in its theory and practice, shastra and yoga", (Preface to Paratrisika Vivarna by Jai Dev Singh, 1998).

Moreover, Swamiji being the only living Master of oral tradition of the lineage of Kashmir Shaiva preceptors, was the only authentic custodian of the oral teachings. This particularly attracted spiritual luminaries like Swami Muktanand and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Swami Muktanand especially was in his association from early days, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi would visit Ishwar Ashram with whole of his foreign entourage every year. Mother Ellis from Swami Ram's Light of Yoga Society, U.S.A. was a keen and regular visitor to seek the oral transmission from Ishwar Swaroop. Andre Padou describes Swamiji as "certainly the last depository of the teachings of Trika, as it was transmitted from Master to disciple for centuries"; (Trans. La Paratrisikalaghuvrti de Abhinavagupta; Institute Civilization Indienne, 1975, p.18). This fact gave an edge to quest, as Silburn aptly puts: "It is my inestimable good fortune to have been able to draw from the knowledge of this great master, the last to possess the key to a doctrine among others most profound and mysterious"; (i.e Vijnana Bhairava, 51). There can be no doubt that the scholars who came to Lakshmanjoo felt the need for a guide with access to the oral tradition. They found him an extraordinary human being, multidimensional, embodying the obvious value of years of scholarship, but also with the more intangible attributes associated with yogic realization. He weaved his scholarship and his spiritual experience together with the oral tradition of his predecessors. He links this spiritual lineage back to the great Kashmir Shaiva polymath

Abhinavagupta and beyond, (Kashmir Shaivism, the Secret Supreme, Swami Lakshmanjoo, State University of New York, 1988). The non dual Shaiva teaching was passed down through illustrious preceptors like Somananda, his pupil Utpaldeva, and his pupil Lakshmangupta, who was one of the teachers of Abhinavagupta. His disciples Khshemaraj and Jayaratha who gave a commentary on the great Master's masterpiece, the Tantratoka. Late nineteenth century saw in this lineage the exalted saints Swami Manakak (Manas Razdan), later his disciple Swami Ramjoo (d.1914) who is said to have been born a Siddha (realized soul). Among his devotees was Shri Naraya Das, a devout Shaiva householder and successful businessman and one of the promoters of the Houseboat industry in Kashmir. Narayan Das was fortunate enough to be a worthy father of Swami Lakshmanjoo, a Siddha right from the time of his birth. Swamiji was seven years old when Swami Ram left this world. Even at such a young age Swamiji is said to have entered spontaneously into a state of deep meditation. Throughout his remaining years Swami Ram kept a close watch on young Lakshman. At the end of his life, when Swami Ram was departing, he directed his closest disciple Swami Mehtab Kak to watch over young Lakshman—to initiate him, teach him and fill him with the world of Kashmir Shaivite spirituality.

The auspicious event of mystical and spiritual significance took place on ninth May 1907. The house of Narayan Das and Arnimall at Namchabal, Fateh Kadal in Srinagar Kashmir, was blessed with the birth of a Siddha. Swami RamJoo, who had crippled his legs by constant and long Sadanas and Meditation, suddenly sprang up on hearing the auspicious news and started dancing and singing.

गटु चुज त् गाश आव चाने ज़्यनै
जय जय जय दीवकी नन्दनै।

Hail! Hail! O - Devakinandan. Your birth has turned darkness into effulgence. I am Ram and you are Lakshman!" cried Ramjoo!

बु छुस राम तु यि गोम लक्षमन!

The constant sedateness of the child became the cause for worry and the parents took their child to their Master Swami Ramjoo. On seeing the infant he smiled and exclaimed,

हसॉ यि ॲमिस गोमुत ति गॅछ़ितन म्य!

"May this happen to me that has happened to Lakshman". Further he advised parents not to disturb the child.

As a young boy, besides his schooling, he became deeply absorbed and involved in learning Sanskrit language under the tutorship of Rajanka Maheshwar (Maheshwar Razdan) and Harabhat Shastri, the two well-known Sanskrit scholars of Kashmir. As a boy he had learned Sanskrit in the traditional fashion by first memorizing and reciting the grammar (Ashtadyayi) of great grammarian Panini. Then he studied the language from Kashmir Shaivite point of view, understanding that the Sanskrit alphabet and language were actual expressions of Ultimate Reality. With a deep understanding of fundamentals of the language, under the guidance of his Master Swami Mehtab Kak, and through his own experience he was able to glean the special meanings hidden within the alphabet and verses. Spiritually, young Lakshmanjoo was in an advanced stage of Sadhana under the constant guidance of his Guru Swami Mehtab Kak.

It was at the age of thirteen years that due to the incoming pressures of marriage proposals, but mainly due to his intense quest for Realization, that Lakshmanjoo decided to leave his home and be in seclusion in the deep forests of Sadhu Ganga of north-west mountains of Kashmir.

The wise father Narayan Das took the alarm and sought out his ascetic son from the deep forests with the promise to make for him a separate cottage in seclusion on any spot of his choice and liking. Shortly Swamiji's father purchased a piece of land with dense grooves of trees on the slopes of mount Kaplas (Kailas) that reflected in the limpid Dal Lake and was situated in-between well-known gardens of Nishat and Shalimar. Soon the Hermitage took its shape and Swamiji moved in and got closeted for his intense Sadhna, practice and meditation through a long span of many years.

At the young age of twenty-one (from 1933) his teachings, lectures and discourses started humming in His Hermitage, and the disciples started thronging around Swamiji to hear and get enlightened. His sermons and lectures on Kashmir Shaiva Shastras were picked up by devotees, disciples and scholars for study and publication. In time Swamiji's reputation spread, and spiritual leaders and scholars of international repute thronged for Darshan, blessing and for enlightenment. From world over scholars and philosophers came to learn and study, and in turn published in volumes this knowledge for Western and Asian studies. French, Italian, Polish and English scholars flooded the world-wide intellectual and philosophic arena with the Kashmir Shaivic thought as understood and learned by them at the feet of Swami Lakshmanjoo in His "Ishwar Ashram".

This ever expansive surge and spread of followers would not afford to miss at any cost Swamiji's birthday celebrations. For all of them the occasion was the source for most revealing prospect of Trance, Bliss and Spiritual transformation that would enwrap the entire host of devotees into a constant permeation of tasteful introspection.

On the auspicious day, early in the retreating reflections of the nocturnal shadows (5 A.M), the portals of "Ishwar Ashram" would be thrown open for the thronging devotees drawn from the international arena and Indian sub-continent.

Inside, amidst the expansive and lush verdure spotted with fruit trees and flower beds, the awe-stricken devotees would be drawn towards the breathtaking, hypnotic and magnetic prospect. Yes, I too was drawn, with what and towards what is inexplicable. I saw and felt! In absentia of entire existential attributes.

Lo, and behold! All in mute attention with their fixed gaze on perfect Shiva incarnate in absolute Nirvikalp Samadhi self-schiring and spreading out magnetic vibrations with ethereal effulgence to thousands of devotees.

Full of reverence and charged with devotion, the devotees would sit in total devotion, and soon the silent semi-morning atmosphere would hum with transporting resonance of chanting of the Gurustuti—the offering of the verses of praise supreme at the feet of their Master. The entire prospect would be replete with devotional mantras and spiritual emotions of Gurustuti.

It would be at about 9 AM that the Master would come out of the Samadhi after about five hours duration. The after-taste of the Bliss would linger on in apparently wide eyes but still somewhere else. Soon the Master would feel his external situation and would give the faint but celestial smile to all the devotees. The audience would offer their happiness and praise through recitation of poetry and music. Swamiji would put then Tilak with his own hands to thousands of his devotees.

After the birthday pooja the prasad and food would he served to the devotees. Every year more than ten thousand to fifteen thousand people would, with eagerness and love, have the Prasad in the company of their Master.

Swamiji's conclusive teaching for Americans in U.S.A was significantly pregnant with Message and Miracle. New York City was facing dry and rainless weather for three consecutive years. Swamiji asked his American followers and disciples to perform Yagna (Hawan) to Amriteshwara. A special permission was sought from government authorities for lighting the Sacred Fire as it was prohibited to create smoke in the atmosphere. The yagna started and thus the New Yorkans enjoyed the blissful showers once again.

These were the days when Swamiji was in complete Bhairavahood; and as Bhairava whatever he taught and preached was clear, prophetic and authoritative. The words of Lance E. Nelson of San Diego University, are apt and to the point of what Swamiji revealed. Nelson questioned about the difference between Shaiva non dualism and Shankaras Advaita Vedanta. "In response Lakshmanjoo described the Shaiva yogin's power to elevate his or her perception of objective reality so the Universe 'Shines' as the dynamic movement of the Supreme consciousness itself. What struck me most profoundly was his metaphor for this extraordinary power of transmutation. He called it 'digesting the universe'. I somehow felt that here was a teacher who knew in the most profound sense what he was talking about".

CHAPTER 28

JAGAD GURU BHAGAVAAN GOPI NATH JI—A SAINT APART

—TRILOKI NATH DHAR 'KUNDAN'

A MIRACLE

It is by now an open secret and a matter of common knowledge that the officers and personnel of the Indian Army, who had never even heard of him saw Bhagavaan Gopi Nath Ji at the front during Kargil conflict with Pakistan Army, guiding them during the operations. These Army Officers have attributed the successful recapture of the Tiger Hills mainly to the directions they received from him during the counter assault launched by them. It was an officer of 18 Grenadiers, who first revealed how this mysterious saint of Kashmir directed the operation and how the commandoes acted according to his command with the result that the strategically important feature of Tiger Hills was snatched from the clutches of the enemy. The officer had heard about him from a Kashmiri Army Officer' and had seen a locket in his neck with his photograph. It was because of this background that he had recognized the saint with a white turban and a red Tilaka' on his forehead. He vouched that in the first instance the Indian Army encountered enormous difficulties but after this great and mysterious saint appeared on the scene, the strategy was restructured and it bore fruit. He had no doubt in his mind that this success in recapturing this formidable and strategically all important peak was made possible by this unforgettable character emerging on the scene on July 3.

The higher echelons of the Indian Army also were curious to know more about this strange episode. They were informed that according to some war heroes this saint had already guided the forward ranks of the Army during 1947, 1965 and 1971 wars against Pakistan. There should be nothing surprising about this. Shri B.L. Kak, a well-known journalist has quoted Swami Yogananda as having recorded in his book, 'Autobiography of a Yogi' that 'yogis can materialize and dematerialize themselves and move with the velocity of light and utilize the creative light rays in bringing into instant visibility any physical manifestation'. Men of common prudence cannot, however, account for these things. It is perhaps because of this that the Army Officer has recorded in his diary that nobody would believe him when he would reveal that it was Bhagavaan Ji who led this 11-hour assault leading to the recapture of this dominating peak called Tiger Hills in the Kargil region that proved to be the turning point in the 40 days old conflict with Pakistan.

Some devotees of his who were very close to him have said that during 1962 when the Indian Army was engaged in halting the onslaught of the Chinese troops, one day he left his residence and returned only the next day. His body was cold and shivering and he had caught cold and was having the symptoms of bronchitis. When asked he replied that he had gone to Tibet border to settle scores. A few days soon thereafter there was cease-fire on the battlefront. When the decisive war of 1971, which created the separate country of Bangla Desh, was being fought, some devotees of Bhagavaan Ji prayed in his Ashram at Kharyar in Srinagar throughout the day and begged of him to save the country. Bhagavaan Ji appeared before one of them in response to their prayers and directed him that a particular item should be offered by all of them jointly before the evening 'Aarti' by way of oblation for four consecutive days. After these four days there was an announcement on the Radio and Television by Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India that General Niazi of the Pakistan Army had surrendered before the Indian Army and the war was over. This was his way of influencing the matters of his country even long after giving up his mortal frame.

A Saint Apart

Bhagavaan Ji was a saint, who did not believe in creating a sect or a group around him. He was not given to discourses or philosophical sermons. His aim had been to know the truth, mitigate the suffering of people and give spiritual guidance to those who sought it from him. Because of these peculiarities nobody could see anything unusual in him that would suggest his eventual sainthood. Leading a group of young friends to various shrines or arranging *'Rasa Leela'*, the spiritual dances, remaining celibate or even seeing some prominent saints occasionally could not be sufficient indication of his being a 'Sadhu'. He did no miracles in his childhood and demonstrated no super natural powers. Why should he have done so? After all he had not to impress anyone or prove his stature or position. He was a quiet, shy lad who was of religious bent of mind no doubt but in the conventional manner only. Every household in Kashmir had a 'pooja' room called *'Thokur Kuth'* earmarked for daily worship. Small 'Shiva Lingam' of crystal, a 'Saligram' of a crimson coloured stone, a coin showing Shri Rama Panchayatan. Ganesha and replicas of other deities would be kept there with devotion. Every morning these idols would be washed, smeared with sandal-paste, decorated with flowers of all hues and then propitiated with devotional hymns, 'Bhakti Stotras'. In these private worshipping sessions as also at different pilgrimage centres popular 'Stotras' like Bhawani Sahasranam, Indrakshi, Panchastavi, Shad-akshar and Pancha-akshar hymns would be sung. People would also sing 'Leelas' and 'Bhajans' in praise of their choicest Deities, either in chorus with the accompaniment of Harmonium, Tabia and earthenware pitcher called *'Not'* or solo, in individual ways, with faith and dedication.

This was the general religious scenario of an average Kashmiri family. Then there was extra religious fervour and atmosphere in his father's house and in the house of his maternal grandfather. No wonder, therefore, that Bhagavaan Ji turned out to be an ascetic of highest spiritual attainment. He was simple in manners, straightforward in demeanour, man of few words, agile and restless in mind but firm and resolute in his aspiration to know the Divine. He never adopted any outward garb of a saint. Neither did he grow a beard nor did he wear any ochre dress like the usual mendicants. His dress was that of an ordinary Kashmiri Pandit, a shirt, a waistcoat, a 'Pheran' with a detachable white lining and a turban tied on the head. During the winters he would put a black blanket over his shoulders and take a 'Kangri' inside his 'Pheran'. There was nothing unusual in all this that would give an impression that he was a sage of highest order. Yet he was a saint, a seer, a sage, and a saviour of the mankind. When he grew up, however, he did smoke a 'Chillum' and had a 'Dhooni' lighted in front of him. At best this gave an impression of his being a *'Mastana'* or one lost in the world of his own and not that of an accomplished emancipated soul that he actually was. How could one gauge the spiritual plane at which our Master was or the level of spiritual accomplishment that he had reached. Strange are the lives of such yogis and mysterious are their ways.

The Abode of Sages

After draining the waters of Satisar with due penance at the instance of his son Nila, it was the desire of the great Kashyap Rishi to make Kashmir a haven for Rishis and convert this holy land into a hermitage. No wonder, therefore that every household in Kashmir has given birth to a sage. It is the unique feature of Kashmir that whereas every mountain peak is celestial, every spring is sacred and every nook and corner is a place of pilgrimage, every village and every township has produced a sage of eminence. Consequently a great number of '*Grihasta Sadhus*', household ascetics have lived in this pious land. They have given spiritual guidance and mental peace to a host of their devotees and others from time to time. Some of them have composed mystical and devotional poems in a variety of forms, *Bhajans, Leelas* (Hymns in praise of God), *Vakhs, Shrukhs* (Quatrains containing moral and spiritual message) and so on. The message they gave was one of righteousness, piety, purity and penance. In the Hindu period of our history there have been great scholar-sages from Vasugupta, Utpaldev, Somanand and down to Abhinavgupta, and others, who propounded the world famous Trika philosophy — a monastic doctrine unique in many ways. They wrote original texts, treatises and commentaries in Sanskrit notably Spanda Karika, Shivastotravali, Shiva Drishti, Parmarthasara, Tantralok and the like.

From the fourteenth century onwards and with the advent of Islam, we have had saints who wrote or preached through the medium of Kashmiri language. At the head of this list is the great Lal Ded who was followed by Nunda Rishi, Roopa Bhawani, Paramananda, Krishna Razdan, and others. There were quite a few Muslim Sufis as well, notable among them being, Swachha Kral, Rahman Dar, Shah Gafoor, Waza Mehmood, Shamas Faqir, Wahab Khar, Nyama Sahib, Asad Paray and Ahad Zargar. Kashmiris sing their compositions with reverence and devotion and these provide light and guidance. There, however, have been other saints and sages, who may not have written or composed any text or any poetry but they have guided many a seeker and provided solace to the suffering humanity. Some of these holy men revered and remembered by all Kashmiris are Krishna Kar, Reshi Peer, Sona Kak, Jeevan Shah, Mirza Kak, Kash Kak, Nanda Bab, Swami Nanda Lal, Grata Bab, Mathura Devi, Swami Laxman Joo, Shankar Razdan. In this galaxy of stars there appeared a shining Pole star called Bhagavaan Gopi Nath Ji, who in his lifetime got the title *'Jagad Guru'* or the preceptor of the world. He was born towards the end of Nineteenth century and lived in Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir State throughout his life.

Birth and Background

Srinagar city is situated on either bank of the river Vitasta, also known as Jehlum. This river is the lifeline of the valley and sprouts forth from the spring of Verinag. Its source is known in local language as 'Vethavotur' and is a sacred place of pilgrimage. In olden days the two sides of this river were connected in Srinagar by seven bridges, now there are nine. Between the second and the third bridges, on the right bank there is a densely populated area called 'Bhana Mohalla." As the name itself indicates the mohalla is named after the family of Bhans, who lived in this area. Shri Lachhman Joo Bhan, a Wazir Wazaarat (present day Collector) in the Revenue Department of the Dogra Maharaja lived here. His son Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan was married to Shrimati Haara Maal, daughter of Pt. Prasad Joo Parimoo and the couple were blessed with a son on the 19th Ashada 1955 (Vikrami) corresponding to 3rd July 1898 AD, who was named Gopi Nath. There is an unconfirmed report that sometime before his birth Swami Vivekananda, who was in Kashmir then, had paid a visit to that place. Some say that he called on the family and others say he stopped short of entering the house and sat on a tailor's shop below it. Coming events cast their shadow before. Probably Swami Ji was aware that a great and a pious soul was going to be born there. Sometime around that time in 1898 was born Ronald Nixon in Cheltenham, UK, who came to India in 1921, became a *Sanyasi,* a monk and was eventually known as Shri Krishnaprem Vairagi, a worthy disciple of Yashoda Ma. Two years earlier in 1896 were born A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, the founder of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness or ISKCON and Anandamayi Ma, who was referred to as 'the purest flower the soil of India has ever produced' by Swami Sivananda Saraswati, the founder of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh.

Obviously there was something celestial about the last decade of the Nineteenth Century. It is no surprise, therefore, that Bhagavaan Ji should have been born in this auspicious decade. His father Pandit Narayan Joo was a highly religious person, a devout and spiritually very elevated. He dealt with Pashmina wool business. That he was a pious person of highest order devoid of any greed and coveting is clear from the fact that he gave up his ancestral home at Bhana Mohalla and other possessions inherited from his father, in favour of his stepmother and her children. Himself he shifted to the house of Pandit Shiv Ji Khyberi in Bhana Mohalla itself, along with his parents and family including young Gopi Nath Ji, about ten years of age. He had two other sons. The elder one Pt. Govind Joo Bhan remained a bachelor. He worked in the Customs and Excise department and died in 1946. The younger one, Pt. Jia Lal was given in adoption to a family of Kaks at Sathu Barbarshah. He was married but had no issues. He was a draftsman in the State PWD and died in the year 1964. He too was spiritually inclined and would always be seen engaged in the service of Sadhus and the poor and downtrodden. At the time of his death Bhagavaan Ji is said to have remarked that the departed soul had merged with the Divine and, therefore, it was not surprising that he had given up his gross body. This is an indication enough that he too was spiritually at a very high level - a typically household sage, 'Grihasti-Sadhu'.

Shrimati Haara Maal, Bhagavaan Ji's mother was the daughter of Pandit Prasad Joo Parimoo, who lived at Sekidafer. He was also a saint in his own right. He and Swami Anand Ji of Jamanagari,, Shopian were the disciples of the same Guru and Pandit Parimoo was considered to be spiritually so profound that he was fondly called 'Zada Bharata' after 'Jada Bharata', the legendary saint of the Puranas. It is said that in the beginning he had no issues and, therefore, he adopted a son, Madhav Joo. Soon thereafter he had a vision of Shri Rajna Bhagavati while in samadhi at Tula Mula shrine. The Bhagavati chided him for having gone for adoption when she herself was desirous of taking birth in his house. Eventually Haara Mal was born, who was to give birth to Bhagavaan Ji in course of time. Shri Parimoo, the grandfather of Bhagavaan Ji had two more daughters, Badar Ded and Zapaer Ded and two sons, Bhagawan Das and Dama Kak. Holding *"Satsang'* or spiritual meetings was a matter of routine in their house. Prasad Joo initiated his younger daughter, Zapaer Ded into 'Japa-yoga' himself as a result of which she was recognized as an accomplished saint when she was around fifty years of age. His son, Pandit Bhagawan Das Parimoo was a devotee of Bhagavati Sharika and would go to Hari Parbat daily for circumambulation. Teaching of the scriptures like 'Yoga Vaasishtha' of Patanjali was a regular feature in their house. He would also go to 'Pokhribal' at the foothill of Haari Parvat towards the exit gate of Kathi Darwaza and return by dawn to his home. The spring at 'Pokhribal' used to be desilted once or twice every year. The young Gopi Nath would undertake this job. He would descend into the spring and remove the silt, mud, rotten flowers and other offerings from its bottom to clean the water. He would also attend the annual yajna at this sacred shrine. These activities of his showed that the seeds of spirituality and religious bent of mind were ingrained in the young lad from the very childhood.

Religious Legacy

Bhagavaan Ji had thus, it appears, inherited religious discipline, yoga practices, sainthood and spiritual atmosphere from his mother's side. Whereas his mother was an incarnation of Bhagavati Rajna, his grandfather, his aunt and his maternal uncle, all were initiated saints and devout practitioners of religious rituals. Periodical religious meetings. 'Satsang' had made the whole atmosphere in their house divine and pious. The atmosphere in his own house also was strictly religious as his father was at a high spiritual level, his elder brother practised celibacy throughout his life and the younger one was also given to service of Sadhus. No wonder, therefore, that he was drawn to "*Dharma sadhana*" or the religious pursuit from the early age and as a young boy took pleasure in doing pious jobs as service unto the Divine. Mundane activities and normal household life did not, therefore, interest him at all. He developed aversion to sense objects and became indifferent to food, clothing and other means of comfort. This was manifest in his attitude in later years of his life. It is well said that coming events cast their shadows before. The seeds of his future exalted spiritual position were sown in his young age itself. Yet he was not given to ostentation or exhibitionism and remained throughout a silent and hidden seeker. He spoke very little and that too in low whispers and remained engrossed with the spiritual world of his own although outwardly appearing to be very much in this mundane world. He would seldom address any visitor directly. The conversion would either be indirect or through gestures.

Bhagavaan Ji had two sisters. The sister elder to him was Deva Maali. She gave birth to two daughters and was widowed at a young age. Probably the destiny had willed that she should be free from the worries of her own family so that she gave her full attention to sustain Bhagavaan Ji during the period of his rigorous *'Sadhanaa'* or the spiritual pursuit. She remained with him for a major portion of his life, taking care of his food, clothing and well being, till she died in 1965. She was with him during pilgrimages and occasionally on his visits to some prominent saints of the time. Her elder daughter.

Shrimati Kamala Ji was married to Pt. Shyam Lal Malla and the couple got one son and two daughters. It was in their house at Chandapora that Bhagavaan Ji spent the last eleven years of his life and gave up his mortal frame in 1968. The younger daughter, Chanda Ji was married to Pt. Madhav Joo Sathu. Bhagavaan Ji stayed in their house at Rishi Mohalla for ten years before moving to the house of Mallas in 1956. Bhagavaan Ji's younger sister was Shrimati Janaki Devi. She died at a young age after giving birth to two sons and two daughters. She was also devoted to her brother and used to serve him on various occasions.

Living in '*Vangaejvore*' (hired houses with or without rentals), moving from house to house, losing near and dear ones and the resultant turmoil made this young boy vividly aware of the frivolity of the worldly matters and the need to strive to know the Supreme Truth. Consequently he became an introvert. It is because of these traits and the fact that from his childhood itself he was not open and communicative that many people have observed that there were no signs of sainthood in him in his younger days. He had inherited piety and spiritual bent of mind both from his father and mother's side. The seeds of '*Saadhana*' were there and the deprivation, turmoil and grief that he experienced made these seeds sprout and he chose a path of sainthood that was destined for him. No doubt the cumulative virtue '*Sanchitpunya*' of the previous many births had a big role to play in shaping his spiritual life. Without the intrinsic qualities of sainthood and the inclination towards '*sadhana*' carried over from the previous births, the turmoil would only have caused depression and turned him an escapist and would not have given rise to the positive aptitude towards seeking the Divine.

He must have been around ten years of age when his father shifted from his ancestral home to the house of Pt. Shiv Ji Khyberi in the same area, Bhana Mohalla. He had given up his palatial three-storeyed ancestral house and property in favour of his stepmother and her children. The family lived there for about one and a half years. In 1909 they moved to the house of Pt. Keshav Joo Nagri in Shaalayar where they lived for three years. These were the days of schooling for the young Gopi, who passed the middle standard, which at that time was of good reckoning. It was here that he lost his mother when he was just twelve years of age. In 1912 the family moved to Razverkadal house of Pt. Kailash Joo Bhan. During this period Bhagavaan Ji joined his maternal uncle in Pashmina wool business for some time. Thereafter he took employment with Vishi Nath

Printing Press as a compositor. This engagement continued for three years and in between the family again shifted to Sekidafer in his maternal grandfather's house. His sojourn here seems to have intensified his spiritual activities. Earlier he used to visit the saint Zana Kak and now he would press the feet of the Jatadhari saint Balak Kaw, fondly known as Bal Ji. The family stayed at Sekidafer for seven years. His stint with the local press lasted just three years and then he started a grocer's shop at a place called 'Chaidob'. In 1920 the family took up residence at Safa Kadal in the house of Pt. Keshav Joo Dhar. Bhagavaan Ji shifted his Kiryana shop to Sekidafer. He formed a group of young friends and as the leader of the group arranged occasional trips to holy places like Tula Mula, Vitsamag, and Mahadev. He was fond of going to various saints, meeting them and having their darshan. It is possible that during these meetings he might have been discussing the problems encountered by him as a seeker in his quest for the Divine and sought answers to his queries. Alas these secret conversations are not made public and, therefore, one has just to presume what must have transpired between these sages. Surely they would not talk about worldly matters unless the topic veered round the good of the mankind at large.

It is not uncommon in Kashmir that a sage is born in an apparently ordinary household. There is a saying in Kashmiri, *'Lembi chhu pamposh phatan'* meaning that a lotus grows in muddy waters. We have had a galaxy of such saints, both men and women. In 14th century we had the great saint-poetess Lal Ded whose '*Vakhs*' or sayings are on the tip of every one's tongue. We have had Roop Bhawani in the 17th century who was an incarnation of Goddess Sharika. We had Krishna Kar, the illustrious preceptor of another great saint, Rishi Peer, who was called 'Peer Pandit Padshah, Mushkil Kusha har du jahan' meaning a King of saints capable of removing all the difficulties of both the worlds, here and beyond. In the contemporary scene also we had big names like Kash Kak, Nanda Bab, Grata Mo't, Mathura Devi, Sati Ded et al. In the lineage of Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy luminaries we had Vasu Gupt, Utpal Dev. Somanand, Abhinav Gupt. Swami Ram, Swami Mahtab Kak and Swami Laxman Joo. They have left behind a Treasure of literature expounding the tenets of the unique 'Trika' Philosophy of this pious land.

This basically a non-dualistic philosophy, propounds that the whole creation is the manifestation of the Divine and is, therefore, real and not an illusion. It comprises thirty-six elements and the spiritual quest consists in moving from objectivity to subjectivity or vice versa and attaining the position where the two get merged. In this doctrine the Divine is perceived as the Supreme Universal Consciousness, which manifests itself in the form of the creation with the help of its own inseparable energy aspect out of its own free will. Kashmir has been fertile enough to give birth to saints like Bhagavaan Gopi Nath, who during his lifetime got the epithet of 'Jagad Guru', the Preceptor of the World. To his numerous disciples he was 'Bab', the loving father. Some of his disciples have fondly called him 'Bab Bhagavaan' or the God father and God father no doubt he was to his numerous devotees and fortunate persons who gained proximity to him. He was their ultimate hope for support, succour and spiritual guidance. He continues to provide this support in his astral form even now to the people in various nooks and corners of the globe. His birthday and Nirvana day are celebrated every year throughout the length and breadth of the country and abroad with devotion and dedication.

Attractive Disposition

Even today long after he has ceased to exist in human form, Bhagavaan Ji is as radiant as the Sun. He is as cool and soothing as the Moon. He is deep as an ocean and vast as the sky. He is ever fresh as the morning dew. He provides shelter like a mighty Bunyan tree. Whenever we see his portrait, picture or statue a strange kind of magnetic attraction is felt. We are drawn to him by the intensity of the gaze of his eyes. It is as penetrating as the rays of the morning sun entering a closed room through the mesh windows. It is so enchanting as the sight of the rising sun from behind the mountain peaks. It is so captivating as the thousand flowers of all hues blossoming simultaneously. We are drawn towards him because of the attraction of his half open lips, which are eloquent enough to give an impression that they are reciting 'Richas' of the Rig Veda or singing 'Sama' of the Sama Veda or uttering the eternal seed syllable 'Om'. Incidentally he was himself very fond of Shastriya Sangeet or the classical music. We are drawn to him due to the radiance reflected from his glittering countenance and the splendour and grace radiating from Ins white turban and coloured 'Pheran'. This radiance spreads throughout the atmosphere around and envelops the entire audience. We are also drawn to him by the fountain of lights sprouting forth from the vermilion 'Tilaka' of his shining forehead, likened by many with the 'Sharika Shila' at Hari Parbat.

He was a recluse who lived an austere life. He was an ascetic and an introvert who was never after name or fame. He had taken birth not only to achieve the supreme truth himself but also to uplift others spiritually, rescue those in difficulty and relieve the suffering of their pain. He proved to be a pole star guiding the course of the ship of life for a number of devotees. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has rightly observed about such an experience, 'It is good to know that the ancient thinkers required of us to realize the possibilities of the soul in solitude and silence, and to transform the flashing and fading moments of vision into a steady light which could illumine the long years of life.' He was always engrossed in his own divine spiritual world, in communion with the Divine, whom he could approach at will. He was not in favour of getting married. Perhaps he thought that he would not be able to devote his full attention to the 'sadhana' that was his main interest and the aim of his life. We have had many examples of sages who did not marry for the same reason or if they did under force and coercion of their parents, they had to neglect their family, which pained them. The 14th century saint Nunda Rishi was forced to marry and got two children. Eventually his wife died and he himself went into a cave for intense penance. The burden of bringing up the kids fell on his aged mother. It is said that the old lady approached him and asked him to relieve her of this troublesome responsibility. The sage looked up towards the sky and requested God to take away the children since household duty was not his forte. Instantaneously the children died and that was the end of this distraction for him. To avoid such a grave and pathetic situation it was in the fitness of things that Bhagavaan Ji should have from the beginning decided not to marry and lead the life of a celibate. He had special liking for the celibates although he was equally considerate and kind towards the devotees who were householders. He recognized that even they could attain spiritual heights but the path for them was more arduous.

Aptitude and Inclination

In 1923 on Vijay Saptami he joined a group of people comprising the families of Shalis and Parimoos for pilgrimage to Mattan. When they reached Khanabal by boat, he along with a couple of his associates separated from the group and dashed off to see the saint Jeevan Sahib, who lived somewhere that side. There are other instances when he similarly went to see other saints. He would likewise organize trips to Kshir Bhawani, Mahadev, Vitsarnag and other holy places along with a group of people as their leader. This shows that Shrines and

Saints attracted him a lot. Shrines would provide him the right atmosphere and a serene environment for his spiritual 'sadhana'. Saints would provide him the proper forum to talk about his spiritual experiences and also help him choose the right mode of *'sadhana'* best suited to his genius and temperament. He must have carried forward the *'sanskaras'* of his previous births because of which the latent sainthood in him started flourishing right from his young age. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita says, *'Anekajanma sansiddhah tato yanti paran-gatim* - a seeker gets perfected over a number of births and then only attains the exalted spiritual position'. The exalted spiritual position that Bhagavaan Ji attained during his lifetime stands testimony to the fact that he had a number of highly successful spiritual lives in the past, the cumulative effect of which enabled him to merge with the Divine during this life.

Although the formal school education did not satisfy his mental needs, he did continue his studies till he completed the Middle Standard. He was a student of the Church Missionary School, Fateh Kadal, just across the river from his house. A renowned missionary educationist, Tyndel Biscoe had established this school as a part of his missionary work. The two of Bhagavaan Ji's close classmates were Pt. Vish Nath Kukiloo and Pt. Gash Lal Bhan. The trio would jump into the river Vitasta from the diving board of the school and swim down the river right up to the Veer after the seventh bridge 'Safa Kadal' and then swim back to the third bridge, Fateh Kadal. It is authentically known that he had a good command over Persian, Sanskrit and Urdu. He knew both Devanagari and Sharada scripts. Whether he had read these languages or acquired their knowledge by the dint of his spiritual acumen is, however, not known. There are many devotees of his who have vouched that in his ecstatic mood he would sometimes utter beautiful sentences in English as well. It is also said that when the Kashmir question was being discussed and debated in the Security Council he had uttered a few sentences in an unintelligible language, which turned out to be Russian eventually as these very sentences were spoken by the Russian Delegate the next day while vetoing the resolution of the Council sponsored by the Western powers, which was detrimental to the interests of India. In his early life Bhagavaan Ji would recite Bhawani Sahsranama. Indrakshi, Panchastavi, Vishnu Sahasranama. Mahimnastotra and Shivastotravali. He would occasionally recite the Vaakhs of Kashmiri Saints as well. He was an ardent reader of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, a copy of which was always by his side.

Himself also he did not attach too much importance to his external self, the body or its upkeep and maintenance. Every morning he would wash his face and Yajnopavit with water at a water tap. Then he would be seated on his *'asana'*. Here he would tie his turban and put on a tilak of saffron with a little ash in the centre. Thereafter he would light his 'Dhooni' in an iron sigdi placed on a stone slab or in a large iron tray. The 'Dhooni' would be kept burning with firewood from morning till evening. In the morning some oblations would be offered in the 'Dhooni' and then he would fill his 'chillum' and engage in smoking. Oblations into the fire would consist of *"Shakkar'* (raw sugar, yellowish-brown in colour), rice, barley, dry fruits, mint and skimmia leaves, *"be patra'* and flowers of sorts. This *'yajna* was a detached *'sattvika yajna'* described as the yajna of the highest order in the Bhagavad Gita in the following verse: *"Aphalakankshibhir-yajnah vidhi drishto ya ijyate, yashtavyam-eva-iti manah samadhaya cha Sattvikah* - Yajna performed without desiring any fruit, as per procedure, with mind fixed on yajna only for its own sake is categorized as a *sattvika yajna'*. He was particular that the 'Dhooni' was always in flame and it was not merely a burning charcoal. This indicated the importance he imparted to the light 'Prakasha' represented by the flame and blaze. This is in consonance with the Vedic prayer, *'Tamaso majyotirgamaya* - lead me from darkness to light'.

Signs of Sainthood

He was indifferent to everything external. In the matter of food also he showed a lot of indifference. He used to say that one should not eat when one is hungry but feed this body only when there is no urge for eating or appetite. This was obviously to conquer hunger and thirst. He would go without food for days together and sometimes eat ferociously. Perhaps he believed in what is stated in Shri Gita about digestion, *'Aham Vaishvanaro bhutvapraninam deham-ashritah, pranapana-samayukhtah pachami annam chaturvidham* - Abiding in the body of living beings as *Vaishvanara,* associated with *pran* and *apana,* inhale and exhale, I digest the four types of food'. Normally he would take a cup of Kashmiri black tea called *'Mogael chai'* at about 9 a.m. At about 1 p.m. he would have his lunch consisting of rice, vegetables etc. For this he had to be reminded by his sister and many times he would decline saying that either it was too late or too early. In the afternoon he would again take a cup of *'Mogael chai'* or salted tea with milk, called *'Sheer chai'* in Kashmiri. More often he would take only one meal a day and even that he stopped eight months before giving up his gross body. Even while eating or taking tea he would be lost in his own contemplation, in his own *'Sadhana'* and in his own spiritual world. The tea in the Kashmiri bronze cup called *'Khose'* would get ice cold while in his hand for a prolonged time. Then he would either gulp it down or throw it away. During fasting he would be physically weak but mentally alert. *'Chillum'* was his constant companion and as per his own statement it would give him enough nourishment. It seems he had complete mastery and control over his sense organs because of which he did not feel hunger or need for any thing else.

In his later years he would recite a shloka or two from these scriptures but would not read am them: perhaps he had memorized them thoroughly. He seems to have been particularly fond of the fourth 'Stava' called the *'Ambastava'* or the Hymn to Mother. He would himself recite a verse or two from it. Once when Shri S.N. Bakshi was introduced to him as a melodious singer of the 'Panchastavi' he asked him to recite the same fourth hymn in a singing tone. Another important text that was very dear to his heart was the 'Guru Gita', a hymn in praise of the preceptor. This clearly demonstrated the amount of importance he gave to a preceptor for those who aspire for the Supreme Truth. His attendance at the Satsang of saints and scholars shows that he took keen interest in Vedanta and Kashmir Shaiva Darshan in particular and in other disciplines discussed at these meetings in general. For him the different paths of devotion and self-realization did not matter. It was the goal of merger with the Divine, which was of utmost importance for a seeker. The Scriptures were, therefore, of secondary importance to him and what mattered was the personal spiritual experience. Some Sadhu is reported to have made a comment about his not being well versed in scriptures to a disciple of his. Endowed with a clear vision as he was, he made a mention of this comment when the disciple visited him. By this he proved that knowledge does not come to a seeker by merely reading and memorising like a parrot but by perception, vision and yoga and that the experienced truth is supreme and is superior to that acquired by reading scriptures or by listening to discourses. He believed in this shloka from 'Panchadashi': *'Adhitya chaturo vedan sarva-* shastranya-*anekshah. Brahma tattvam na janati darvi sooparasam yatha* - Just as the feeding spoon does not get the taste of the soup served with it, a person does not get to know the Divine merely by reading the four Vedas and all the scriptures many times over'. The idea conveyed here is that the scriptures are there to help. They are the means but it is the perceived and experienced truth ultimately that matters.

The Spiritual Attainment

What brought him emancipation and what gave him the spiritual height of a rare order, nobody knows. However, one thing is clear that he had attained *'Moksha'* through his spiritual insight, *'Jnana'*. It is rightly said, *'Jnanena cha-apavargo*— it is through knowledge that one gets liberated'. Righteousness takes one to spiritual heights, *'Dharmena gamanam-urdhvam'*, lack of righteousness throws one in the abyss, *'Gamanam-adhastad-bhavati-adharmena'*, and through subconscious aspirations 'Vasana' one is tied to vice and virtue, *'Viparyayadishyate bandhah'*. Knowing these facts fully well Bhagavaan Ji seems to have cleaned his mind of all conscious and subconscious aspirations and inclinations. He was '*Vasana-rahita*' and had instinctively and intuitionally directed his mind and soul towards the Divine. He was a *'Jeevana-mukta'*— an emancipated soul during his lifetime. He had transcended all distinctions of being and non-being, right and wrong, true and false, loss and gain, respect and disrespect, love and hate. Even when circumstances demanded of him to attend to some worldly chores or family problems, he did it in a dispassionate and detached manner. He lived like a lotus in a pool of water, unscathed and unaffected, *'Padmapatram-iva-ambasa'*.

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It seems he was deeply seeped into the dictates of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. He would strictly adhere to *'Yama'* and *'Niyama'*, do's and do not's prescribed therein. He adopted the laid down posture *'asana'* and engaged in *'Dharna'* and *'Dhyana'* or contemplation, concentration and meditation. His aim was *'Samadhi'* or complete merger with the Divine and this art he was perfecting slowly and steadily, largely unnoticed by others. With his constant companion 'Chillum' and occasionally *'Khos'*, the Kashmiri teacup in his hand also he would be miles away absorbed in his own ideas wandering in his own world. The sparks from the lire in the 'Chillum' would bum his dress even his lips sometimes, the tea in the cup would become ice-cold and he would be unmindful of all this, himself dwelling in his spirit and not the gross body. An eminent Urdu poet has said, *'Rehte hain apne jism main kuchh istarah se ham, Apne nahin kisi gair he ghar mein hun jaise'* meaning that I live in my own body in such a detached way as if I live in somebody else's house and not in my own. This was exactly what Bhagavaan Ji must have lived like. His real self was his soul and the spirit that was embodied in the gross body and only carried by it.

When he lost his father in the house of Pt. Dina Nath Bota at Rangateng, it seems his last link with the mundane world was severed. He plunged headlong into the rigorous discipline of '*Yoga Sadhana'*. His communication with outside world was minimal and he remained in communion with his inner self all the time. May be he also believed in what Lal Ded had said six hundred years ago: *'Go'ran dopnam kunuy vatsun, nyabra dopnam andar atsun.* — My preceptor told me but one secret, to go from without to within to seek Him'. There are eyewitness accounts that while at the shop he would seldom speak to others and would remain lost in his own inner world. Many a time he would leave the shutters of the shop unbolted and unlocked and rush to Hari Parbat. This shows the aversion he had towards the worldly affairs although the circumstances compelled him to attend to family matters occasionally. That sure must have been a detached involvement, an outward act.

Effect of The Gita

While there are authentic accounts of his knowledge of various *'Stotras'* and devotional texts, it is not known if he had studied various scriptures and texts relating to Vedanta, Kashmir Shaiva Darshan or the like. Even otherwise 'Bhawani Sahasranam' and 'Panchastavi' are the two texts very popular among the Kashmiri

Pandits, the all-Brahmin community. There are two possibilities in this regard. Either he had studied some of these texts or he had experienced through his own 'Yoga sadhana' all that is written and explained in these scriptures. Such things are not uncommon with many a saint of high spiritual order. In Kashmiri language it is called *'Apaer achhar'* or acquiring knowledge without reading any text. Even so it has been reported that he had recited the following three selected Shlokas to Pt. Shankar Pandit and Pt. Nila Kanth of Ali Kadal: 1. *Na jayate mriyate va kadachit. Naayam bhutva bhavita va na bhayah. Ajo nityah shashvato-ayam purano na hanyate hanyamane sharire* - The soul has no birth and death. It neither comes into being nor ceases to exist. It is unborn, eternal, constant and ancient, it does not get killed when the body is slain. 2. *Indriyani paranyahuh indriyebhyah param manah. Manasastu para buddhih yo buddheh paratestu sah* — The senses are said to be superior to the body; the mind is superior to the senses; the intellect is superior to the mind and beyond intellect is that or the Brahman. 3. *Na tad bhasayate Suryo na shashanko na pavakah. Yadgatva na nivartante taddhama paramain mama*— The eternal abode of Mine is such that it needs no Sun, Moon or fire to illumine it and having attained it there is no return from there. On one occasion he is said to have recited four of the five 'Stavas' or cantos of 'Panchastavi'.

The year 1929 seems to be a landmark in his life. Till then he must have been in search of the spiritual discipline best suited to his temperament. As soon as he moved to the house of Pt. Tika Lal at Rangateng he intensified his *'Sadhana'* on the path finally chosen by him. There was no looking back for him thereafter. In his typical *'Asana'*, with a bolster on the right and at the back, was seated his *'Sthoola Sharira'* gross body only. His *'Sookshma Sharira'*, the subtle body was engrossed with his *'Ishta Deva'*, the Brahman. His was an embodiment of a single-minded devotion described in the Gita as *'Eka bhakti vishishyafe* - excelling with single minded devotion'. He stayed at this house for seven years. Thereafter he shifted first to the house of Pt. Nila Koul Saraf at Dalhasanyaar and then to the house of Pt. Madhav Joo Sathoo at Rishi Mohalla and stayed in these houses for a period of ten years each. It was in the house of Shri Saraf that for the first time he began to be addressed, remembered and called as Bhagavaan Ji. Finally he moved into the house of Pt. Sham Lal Malla at Chondapora, which turned out to be his last resting place. Here he stayed for eleven years till his 'Maha Nirvana' in 1968. All these places were sanctified and made holy by his presence and by the dust of his lotus feet. Hundreds of people had the good fortune of having his darshan at these places, many blessed people had the good luck of listening to his golden words though limited and very brief, many were cured of their ailments and many more got answers to their queries and remedies to their needs. These answers, however, were always indirect and one had to be very alert and sharp to catch, understand and interpret these.

His subtle self was the most valuable possession with him. He kept nothing for himself. Whatever people brought and offered to him was there and then distributed among all those present. Favoured were those who got a pinch of ash from his *'Dhooni'* and *'Dhoop'* or those who were allowed to have a puff at his 'Chillum'. Fortunate were those who were treated to a cup of tea or even to a meal at his place. Their is an enviable lot as they got the most precious things one could aspire from this seat of *'Dharma'*, truth and righteousness. His *'Aasana'* was a Sanctum Sanctorum, *'Garbha Griha'* and his lotus feet were as sacred as the Flagstaff, *'Dvaja-stambha'* of a temple. The sacred fire in his Dhooni was the 'Agni' about which the Rig Veda says, *'Agnimile purohitam, ratna dhatarnam* - I bow to the fire, which has always in the past kept my interests supreme and which is the giver of wealth'. Agni is next only to Indra in the Vedas. It is significant to note that in Rig Veda alone there are more than 200 'Richas' in favour of Agni. While the white turban above his broad forehead bearing a glistening *'tilaka'*, a coloured *'pheran'* and a blanket over his shoulders were prominent in his external appearance, a 'Chillum' in his hands, a 'Dhooni' with a blazing flame, a pincer, a long iron tong, a spoon for oblations in front of him and a few pillows and bolsters on the right and at the back of his 'asana' constituted all the wherewithal he had in his room wherever he stayed. He believed in no sermons, no scriptural discourses and no scholastic discussions. Physically he would be seated in his *'Aasana'* and his real self would be miles away, in communion with his *'Aradhya'*, the beloved one. Occasionally the word *'Narayana'* would, as it were, slip out from his lips in a feeble low whispering sound. At times he would mutter a few words in such a low tone as if he were talking to himself or to Him who was all the time within him as the great Lal Ded would have it, '*Vuchhum Pandit panani gare* - I perceived Him within myself. Normally, however, his eyes would be looking up with his gaze fixed upwards. He was seldom in direct conversation with any one present before him, lost in the world of his own. At times while puffing at his 'Chillum' he would go in a trance, stay in that position for quite sometime and then return to this world. This situation is called in spiritual parlance *'Sahaja Samadhi'*, or easy communion with the Divine. This is the high point of 'Yoga'.

A Self-initiated Saint

There is a controversy about his preceptor. Many names are mentioned in this regard and many arguments are put forward. Although he has many times stated that one's own effort and preceptor's grace are required for spiritual uplift, yet when himself he was asked who his preceptor was he is reported to have said that any one shloka from the Bhagavad Gita could be the preceptor. It is, therefore, clear that he was self-initiated. Many a miracle is ascribed to him. He delayed death of a person till the wedding of his daughter was solemnized. He cured many patients from severe ailments. He rescued many of his devotees from imminent dangers. Above all he caused a lucky few to have a glimpse of the mother Goddess in the form of a small girl, whom he fed by his own hands with some savouries. He caused rain when it was needed and warded off the clouds when they were likely to cause hindrance in some programme. Many Sadhus who came for the pilgrimage to Swami Amar Nath Ji would call on him. He would pay a Rupee each and then funds would flood from unexpected corners for them to meet their expenditure. He would empty his cloth purse to the needy parents of any marriageable girl and all their needs for the wedding of the girl would be met easily. He was furious to see an unchaste woman or a man of doubtful character, yet he would eventually show compassion towards the erring persons. He inspired householders and celibates alike to take up spiritual 'Sadhana'.

No body knows the path he chose for self-realisation and realization of the Divine. It appears that he taught different methods to different disciples, each according to his capacity, aptitude and inclination. Himself he started with traditional *'Panchanga Upasana'* of Ganesha, Surya, Narayana, Shiva and Shakti. Ganesha is the *'Adi Deva'*, the primary deity and has to be propitiated before any other deity. Surya is described as *'Pratyakhsha Deva'* or the visible deity. Narayana represents the Vaishnava stream and Shiva the Shaiva stream. Whereas Shiva is *Prakasha*, the Eternal Light, Shakti is the inseparable energy of the Divine with the help of which He controls and manages the entire creation, animate and inanimate. The five together complete the *'Panchayatan'* or a group of five that is worshipped traditionally by the Kashmiris. Later on Bhagavaan Ji seems to have concentrated on Shakti, the energy aspect of the Divine. This must have been the result of his having a vision of the Divine Mother when he was a young man of around 25 years of age. From the age of 22 years itself he had started daily circumambulation, *'Parikrama'* of Hari Parbat. He would rush to Hari Parbat, worship and meditate at Devi Aangan and smoking his Chillum in an open hut there be absorbed with his *'Ishta'*, the desired one. There should be no doubt about his having been a regular practitioner of Yogas propounded by Patanjali in his 'Yoga Vasishtha'. One has to look at his life and habits in their totality in order to arrive at the conclusion that he had discreetly adopted its tenets of *'Yama'*, *'Niyama'* and *'Asana'*, gone through the stages of *'Dharna'*, and *'Dhyunu'* prescribed therein and eventually attained the highest stage of *'Samadhi''* described in this text. No wonder, therefore, that he would often be seen puffing at his 'Chillum' gazing upwards unmindful of his surroundings. He appears to have experimented with control of senses by observing silence at times and by fasting for days on end. He may have practised *'Pranabhyasa'* (a Tantric technique of meditation) as well as is clear from the fact that he is reported to have vomited large quantities of blood at times, which is not uncommon in this process. Some persons have recorded that he would also propitiate Saturn.

Patrizia Norelli Bachelet, the Director of Aeon Centre of Cosmology has given a different reason for Bhagavaan Ji paying homage to the Saturn in his daily practice. According to her Saturn rules Capricorn and Capricorn is the planetary ruler of India. Furthermore Saturn has been equated with Chronos, the Time-Spirit. This is considered to be Shiva in his *'Mahakala'* or the 'time supreme' form. She has, therefore concluded that since this planet is central to destiny it is no surprise that Bhagavaan Ji used to pay homage to this planet everyday. She has also observed that such saints, who are perfectly realized souls, perform such acts guided by their own inner command that this must be done. Finally Bhagavaan Ji seems to have settled for *'Aghor-upasana'* of Shiva. This is indicated by the two items, which were his lifetime companions, the 'Chillum' and the 'Dhooni'. This *'Upasana'*, or worship gave him a vision of the past, present and future, powers extraordinary to control even death and capacity to transcend time and space and remain engrossed with the Divine at will. May be he sometimes dabbled in *'Kundalini yoga'* as well. This can be deduced from the accounts of many of his disciples who have found him often in an ecstatic state. This ecstatic state is the result of awakening of *Kundalini,* the dormant energy coil, which has been described by Adi Shankara in his *'Soundarya Lahari'* as '*Cidananda Lahari*' and *'Paramananda Lahari'*, or bliss of the Consciousness and the bliss Supreme, respectively. The *'Sadhaka'* or the seeker remains glued to his *'Aasana'* for hours together, enjoying the feeling of an eternal bliss.

Bhagavaan Ji appears to have reached a *'Jeevan-mukta'* (emancipated in lifetime itself) state at quite a young age in the prime of his youth. Normally this age leads the young men of ordinary prudence astray and they are attracted towards the worldly pleasures. For him, however, the youth was a different cup of tea. It was the time to reflect on the purpose of the life and explore the right path for attaining the Supreme Truth. He did not consider the gross body as the be all and end all of human existence. He would refer to his legs as mere logs of wood. He was unmindful of his body even when it was swollen, unsteady due to prolonged fasting or weak due to some ailment. Once a rat nibbled a hole in one of his heels that remained so for a long time. This shows that he enjoyed himself in his *'Sookshma Sharira'* (Subtle body) of *'Sat, Chit* and *Ananda'* or Being, Consciousness and Bliss and bothered little about his *'Sthula Sharira'* (Gross body) of flesh and blood or the *'Karana Deha'* (Causal body). He had no qualms in taking non-vegetarian food and sometimes showed extreme habits by either not eating at all for a long period or by eating unusually large quantities of food. Taking opium. Datura seeds, *'panak'* and other intoxicants, emptying bottleful of whisky or brandy when offered at times were the other extremes he engaged in and baffled those present on these occasions. Strange are the ways of such saints and nobody can fathom their depth, vastness or gravity.

A Mystery

It is very difficult to classify his method of *'Sadhana'*. He has guided many a disciple transmitting knowledge either through his 'Chillum' or by a mere gaze or by touching them with a pair of tong used for the fire in his 'Dhooni'. There are indications that he prescribed different methods of *'Sadhana'* to different disciples of his. This shows that he would examine the capacity, genius and aptitude of a devotee before suggesting what particular path he should follow to achieve the Supreme Truth. His frequent visits to holy places and shrines and his having shown some people a vision of the Divine Mother in the form of a girl indicates his *'Sakaara*

Upasana' or worship of the Divine with form. Hymns to various deities written in his own hand show his inclination towards *'Bhakti'* or devotion. This is also indicated by the fact that the portraits of gods and goddesses, and great saints like Guru Nanak and Sri Rama Krishna Paramhamsa adorned the walls of his room. This is further corroborated by the fact that he was very fond of classical music. Shri Shivpuri, who would normally go along with his disciples carrying a Harmonium and a pair of Tabla to sing before him, was once asked by him to bring a Tanpura along giving a clear indication that he preferred Classical music to other forms of light music. He would present various ragas like Kedar, Malkauns, Jogia, and Bairagi Bhairav etc. Many well-known Musicians like Shri Shivpuri, Mohd. Abdullah Tibetbaqal and Ved Lal Vakil would present Kashmiri Sufiana Kalam and Bhajans before him.

This indicates the state of proximity or *'Samipya'* in his spiritual life, which is an essential ingredient of the *'Bhakti Marga'* of the dualistic school of Philosophy propounded by Madhvacharya. He would concentrate on 'om' and has written this seed syllable, symbolizing the crux of the Vedas in his own hand in Sharada script. Shri Gita says, *'Pranavah sarva Vedeshu* - I am the Om, the crux of all the Vedas'. He has also written Rama and Shiva decoratively around this Pranava. This shows his firm belief in the fact that Shiva and Vishnu are one and the same. He was so much enamoured about the worship of 'Om' that he once explained that it was the throat of the godhead. Om is described in Maitri Upanishad in these words: 'the sound of Brahman is Om. At the end of Om is silence. It is a silence of joy. It is the end of journey where fear and sorrow are no more, steady, motionless, never falling, ever lasting, immortal. In order to reach the Highest consider in adoration the sound and silence of Brahman. For it has been said, God is sound and silence. His name is Om. Attain, therefore, contemplation - contemplation in silence on Him'. Bhagavaan ji advocated this contemplation on Om. This is also indicative of his *'Nirguna Nirakara upasana'* or worship of the attribute-less and formless God and the state of similarity or *'Savtpya'* in his spiritual life, peculiar to the *Vishishta-advaita* or qualified monism of Ramanujacharya. One has, therefore, to conclude that for him all paths led to the same goal or that he believed that different methods of *'Sadhana'* were useful at different levels of spiritual quest and for seekers with different capacities and attitudes.

Ultimately he became a *'Siddha'*, an accomplished soul conquering death, transcending time and space and remaining in constant communion with the Divine and thus attaining the state of identity or *'Sayujya'* as a spiritual entity, the ultimate goal envisaged in the *Advaita* or non-dualistic doctrine upheld and elaborated by Adi Shankara. It is astonishing that while analysing and writing commentaries on the *'Brahma-sutra'* of Badarayan, the Upanishads and the Gita, called the *'Prasthana Trayee'* the three great commentators, Shankaracharya. Ramanuja and Madhva should have propounded three different schools of Philosophy. This justifies Bhagavaan Ji's saying that one can hold on to any brands of the tree and yet reach the Truth. A saint is once reported to have found it rather baffling that he should have come to the shrine at Tulamula and without performing any puja at the holy spring should have straightaway gone to a hut in the periphery and got absorbed with his own 'Chillum'. Here one is reminded of a couplet written by an Urdu poet, *'Jo khud se guzar jate hain sijda nahin karte* - one who has transcended the self seldom bows'. No doubt he had reached that elevated stage in spirituality where lie had transcended his self and had become one with the Divine. There was thus no need for him to follow the routine rituals or routine practices.

He was a *'Virakhta'*, a detached *'Sadhaka'* although occasionally he attended to his family matters as well as social customs. Shri Shali has stated that he once attended the tenth day ceremony of someone who had died but was seen absorbed with the Sun above. He was compassion personified and that is why he sometimes deferred the death of a person when the situation so demanded and so often relieved people of their pain and suffering. God only knows how many people have benefited due to his benign and compassionate nature and how many have got solace sitting at his lotus feet. Even a cat was allowed to sit in his 'Asana' in spite of the remonstrations of some devotees. It is, therefore, meaningless to enter into a discussion as to which Guru initiated him and what method of worship he professed. Let us not forget what Pushpadanta has said in his *'Shiva-mahimnastotra'*, which Bhagvaan ji often recited in his younger days, *'Trayi sankhyam yogah pashupatimatam vaishnavam-iti, prabhinne prasthane param-idam adah pathyam-iti cha, ruchinam vaichitryat riju kutila nanapathajushyam, nrinam eko gamyah tvam-asi payasam arnava-iva-* At different times different people professing Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga, Shaivism or Vaishnavism due to their personal preferences proclaim their faith as beneficial. Yet all these people treading different paths, whether straight or involved, seek you alone O Lord! Just as all the rivers are heading towards the ocean only.'

Achieving Immortality

The fateful day of Jyeshta Shukla Dvitiya corresponding to 28th May 1968 arrived. It started as usual and Bhagavaan Ji had his usual routine. There was nothing abnormal or unusual about it and no indication of any major event going to take place. Some people came for his darshan throughout the day and got his blessings and prashada of the holy ash. In the afternoon some three Sadhus came and got the customary *'Dakhshina'* of Rupee one each. He puffed at his *'Chillum'*. A devotee made some tea for him but he declined to have it. Then he drank a glassful of sugar-mixed water. A lady devotee wanted to have *'Prashada'* from him. She refused to budge an inch until and unless she received it from him and not from any one else. At the end he did oblige her by taking out some dry fruits from his pocket and gave it to her. Finally the time came and at 5.45 p.m. he uttered the *'Shad-akhshar' Maha mantra* of *'Om Namah Shivaya'* and closed his eyes forever. This was in keeping with what the Lord has said in the Gita, *'Om iti-ekaksharam Brahma vyaharan mam-anusmaran, yah prayati tyejan deham sa yati pararnam gatim* — He who remembers me by uttering the single word 'Om' while giving up the gross body certainly attains the exalted spiritual position'. Uttering these immortal words with the last breath was very significant. It sheds light on his entire life and sums up his message. All along lie had attached a lot of importance to the seed syllable 'Om'. He used to call it the throat of godhead. Om is the crux of both *Nigamas* or the Vedas and *Agamas* or other scriptures. It represents the Absolute God, its Energy and the resultant manifestation in the form of the creation. Shiva is the Divine in his attribute-less and formless state, attaining whom is the high point of spiritual seek. When we pay obeisance to Him by saying *'Namah'* we recognize the limitless 'I' being sought after by the limited 'I'. After all the spiritual *'Sadhana'* is nothing but a journey from this limited 'I' circumscribed by time and space to the limitless 'I' transcending all the barriers of time and space. By uttering these words while giving up the mortal coil he gave a clear indication that he had accomplished the highest point of *'sadhana* ' and was one with *'Param Shiva'*.

Bhagavaan Ji might have ceased to exist in his embodied form but he lives in his astral form even today. A distinction has to be made between *'Kshetra'* or the body and *'Kshetrajna'* or the knower of the body, the terminology used in the Gita. As *'Kshetra'* he may not exist today but as *'Kshetrajna'* he continues to be there. He lives in the hearts of those who loved and adored him. He lives in the memories of those who were relieved of their suffering by him. He lives in the gratitude of those who consider themselves indebted to him for one reason or the other. He lives in the spirit of those who were guided by him in their spiritual quest. He lives in the gatherings where hymns in his praise are sung, where oblations in his name are offered into the holy fire and where the soul-satisfying 'Mantra' of *'Om Namo Bhagavate Gopinathaya'* is chanted with dedication and devotion. He lives in the captivating gaze emanating from his resplendent eyes in the photographs and statues. He lives in the unspoken words that appear to sprout forth from the half-open lips of the statues and portraits placed on pedestals in the Ashrams at different places. He lives in the dreams, thoughts and feelings of his devotees, admirers and beloveds. He had come to this world with a purpose and the purpose was first to complete his own spiritual journey and then to serve the humanity both in mundane and spiritual matters. He accomplished the first purpose by bringing his sadhana to fruition and realizing Self and the Divine. He fulfilled the second purpose by coming to the aid of the suffering and deserving and by guiding the aspirants in their spiritual quest. From all 'accounts given by various people within the country and abroad he continues to fulfil his mission in his astral form. People have seen him in their dreams, perceived him in human form and seen a glimpse of this great soul in their imagination. This has established his oft-quoted utterance, *'Amar chha maran* - How can death come to an immortal.'

Importance of A Preceptor

From different accounts of the devotees it is clear that Bhagavaan Ji attached a lot of importance to the grace of a preceptor. By this he meant that a preceptor was always a must in order to evaluate the need, the capacity and the temperament of a seeker. Although he has emphasized that the effort of the seeker is of paramount importance and that he has himself to strive for the truth, yet he feels that the preceptor helps him in selecting the method best suited to his genius, guides him in spiritual exercise and assists him in warding off the difficulties and overcoming the hurdles. Just as destiny and actions govern the course of one's worldly affairs the two important elements that shape the spiritual *'Sadhana'* of a seeker are *'Guru Kripa'* or the grace of the preceptor and *'Parishramu'* or the effort of the seeker himself.

A World-View

It is clear from the account given in the preceding paragraphs that he experimented with all sorts of spiritual disciplines, different methods of worshipping and various procedures of penance and thus climbed the ladder as it were, step by step. This position also suggests that he had no formal initiation from anyone. For had he got initiation from a Guru he would have been directed on a specific spiritual path and he would have no need for all the experimentation that he actually had to undertake. In that case he would have adopted the path prescribed by his preceptor and stuck to it up to the last. He would give a lot of importance to the path of '*Vichara*' or contemplation, the path leading to supreme awareness and universal consciousness. He used to talk reverentially about persons whom he thought were '*Vicharavan*' or thoughtful. This *vichara* took him to the level of totality, universality and limitless eternity. He appeared before Mr. Simpfendorfor, an Australian devotee in 1978 and remarked: 'World harmony depends on a globally inter- connected network of light among sacred places and groups of people without regard to nationality or religion'. This is a glaring demonstration of Bhagavaan Ji having attained a universal vision and having dismantled all man-made barriers of religion, cast, creed sects and faiths. This is perhaps the elevated position where saints like him quite naturally make statements like, '*Aham Brahmo 'smi* - I am the Brahman, the Divine' or '*Man Khuda* - I am God Almighty' or '*Anal Haq* - I am the Truth' or '*Chidananda Rupo Shivo 'ham Shivo 'ham* - I am Shiva, in the form of Consciousness and Bliss, or in the words of the Upanishad *Tat Twam asi* - That Thou art or the Sufi's *Hama-O-ast* - I am He'.

Shri Rama Krishna is reported to have experimented with Muslim and Christian methods of attaining the Truth with the same amount of success as he had achieved by following the traditional Indian methods of 'Advaita'. Even the great Lal Ded, the 14th Century saint-poetess of Kashmir has said, '*Shiv Chhai thali thali rozan, mo zan Hyond ta Musalman* - God pervades everything, do not, therefore, discriminate between a Hindu and a Muslim'. Bhagavaan Ji also has remarked once, '*Hyond chha akh ta Musalman byakh* - is there any difference between a Hindu and a Muslim?' In fact there is an interesting story involving a Muslim. It is said that a lady came to see him. A Muslim servant accompanied her carrying a bagful of yellow pears called 'Bagugosha'. He directed that these be distributed among all present beginning with the servant. A devotee who was distributing the fruit gave one pear to him but Bhagavaan ji signalled that he be given more. One after the other he got five pears whereas others got only one pear each. Later he revealed that when the lady was purchasing the fruit he had a craving to get some for his consumption but he was not sure that he would get even one as he did not know the person for whom these were being purchased. It is the saints of his stature who have a universal outlook, a world view and an unlimited vision who are able to perceive the truth and express it spontaneously in these expressions: *"Ishavasyam-idam-sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat* - All this that is and that takes place here in this world is pervaded by the Divine' or '*Vasudevah sarvam-iti* — Everything here verily is Shri Krishna only' as clearly stated in the Ishavasya Upanishad and the Gita, respectively.

Lessons to Learn

Bhagavaan Ji was a saint of very few words. He seldom gave a straight answer to any one. He would always refer to himself in plural and would say sentences like, 'We have eaten already' or 'we shall go to Hari Parbat'. Even so he did utter some pithy and meaningful statements from time to time, which have been devotedly recorded by his disciples. Some of these are:

- A person should be endowed with three qualities of *"Sezar, Shozar and Pazar* ' or straight-forwardness, purity and truth.
- *"Amar chha maran* ' meaning that cease to exist which is immortal. Here he refers to the immortality of the soul.
- *'Ahankaras namaskar, sui gav ornkar, tami saet bani sakhshatkar'.* It means that a seeker must realize his self. In so doing he shall realize the Divine and perceive Him as Om. In this situation the subjectivity and objectivity shall get merged.
- *'Yi chhu kitab paran, tor chha gash'.* Here he says that mere reading the scriptures does not bring enlightenment and by inference enjoins upon the seeker to experience the truth.
- A seeker can achieve his goal only if he strives for it and has the grace of his preceptor. *'Mehnat panan ta Gora kripa* ' or one's own effort and the kindness of the preceptor.
- Seeking the truth by contemplation is superior to worshipping the Divine with form. ' *Yi gav tafparun, yi gav veeri shihUs tal pakun* ' meaning that worshipping God with form is an easy-going way like walking under a shade and avoiding the Sun.
- A seeker must put his own mind and breath on the same wavelength as that of his preceptor. This happens only if God so wills, *Yi gat shi yatshun'.*

Bhagavaan Ji had a simple message for a common man that he should earn his living honestly, spend some of his money in charity and remain honest in his dealings. For him all men were equal irrespective of their faith. He used to say, *'Bata chha akh ta Musalman chhu byakh'* meaning that a Muslim is no different from a Hindu. For the seekers of the truth he emphasized to have a positive attitude, be prepared for a strenuous effort and keep on loving God. He attached a great importance to the Gita as a guide and the Panchastavi as a document of penance. He had a world-view of spirituality. He desired that the forces of peace, piety and righteousness world over should pool their efforts and serve humanity so that universal brotherhood prevails and the forces of dissension and division are defeated.

A question is often asked whether a saint can change the *'Prarabdha'* or the destiny of a person. Shri Krishna has said in the Gita *'Yo me Bhakta sa me priyah* - one who is devoted to Me is my beloved'. Once a devout commands the love of the Lord, he is in a position to get anything done through Him. There is a story about the sage Narada. He was once going to 'Vishnuloka' when he happened to pass through a township. A couple living there desperately desired to have a child. They requested Narada to give them a boon so that they got a child. The sage told them to wait till he enquired from Lord Vishnu. The Lord told him that the couple was destined to remain childless. He conveyed this to them but they did not give up their hope. They approached another saint who gave them a boon and in course of time they begot a son. After many years Narada happened to drop in the same house for alms and was surprised to see their son. He was furious when lie was told how they had got the child and in a rage he went to Vishnu to complain about his having been let down by the Lord. The Lord explained that He was duty-bound to keep the word of His devotees, who are dear to Him. Narada instead of recommending a child for the couple had made only an enquiry whether a child was in their destiny. On the other hand the other saint had straightaway ordered, so to say, that a child be given to them and the Lord immediately accepted his command and blessed the couple with a child.

This mythological story illustrates that the accomplished saints can, if they so desire, give any boon and fulfil any desire of their beloved devotees. Ordinarily, however, they would desist from interfering with the nature or tampering with the destiny. These may be termed as their miracles or the manifestation of their compassion or their concern for the suffering humanity. We can get anything at their lotus feet but it depends on us whether we seek transient impermanent pleasures of worldly nature or eternal and limitless bliss and joy of the spiritual realm. To illustrate this it may be stated that once a devotee came to him with a huge number of fresh lotus flowers brought from the Dal Lake. At his insistence Bhagavaan Ji remained motionless - in fact he went in *'Samadhi'*, engrossed with the Divine, while he decorated the Master with these flowers from top to toe in his own choicest way. In order to oblige him and give him the benefit of deriving supreme pleasure he remained in this position for hours together. What better example of selfless love and ecstatic devotion one can give. Yet these acts give eternal joy to the devotees, after all there is a thin line of demarcation between love and madness.

Towards Bhagavaan Consciousness

These directions and the spiritual message received from this saint extraordinary have encouraged a band of his devotees to launch a movement of bringing people under the fold of what they call 'Bhagavaan Consciousness'. Ashrams and centres of worship have been established within the country and abroad. These serve as hubs of twofold activity, *'Sadhana'* or spiritual quest and *'Seva'* or service of the mankind. During 1997-98 yearlong functions were held in India and abroad as a part of centenary celebrations of the Master. The Government of India, Department of Posts issued a special Rs. 3 stamp and the first day cover to commemorate his hundredth birthday. Mayor Schundler of New Jersey proclaimed July 26, 1997 as Jagadguru Bhagavaan Gopinathji Day when a colourful function was held there with devotion and religious fervour.

In one of his articles on Bhagavaan Ji Philip Simpfendorfer, his Australian devotee has recorded his experience in these words: "In the dark of the night, somewhere beyond deep sleep. I sometimes glimpse awareness of his presence. He is not in human form, but his presence is unmistakable. Perhaps his body is an energy field, perhaps a vibration. It touches one of my subtle bodies with light. I suspect that it touches the whole earth because the presence does seem to pervade some rocks and caves and canyons on the bushland property where I live. Several years ago when I knew him more in his astral form. I asked where he really was, and the reply was to the effect that 'We are in the circle of the Shaktis.' The reply is still an enigma to me. Does it mean he is like the hub of a wheel and his emanation like the spokes, connecting with the rim of powerful blessing as it whirls in energy paths across the earth? Nothing can block or stop the waves of power. All nature receives its goodness as do receptive humans. To others, it just passes through them. It is an energy of infinite Consciousness.' He has concluded with a significant remark that if all of humanity lived in Bhagavaan Consciousness, all creation would be open to infinity. He is sure that Bhagavaan Ji is constantly breathing his consciousness into us. If we also perceive the situation in a similar way any apparent miracle performed by our master will cease to be a miracle and will be seen as a natural and logical phenomenon, irrespective of whether the occurrence has taken place before or after his giving up the mortal coil.

CHAPTER 29

SAINTS AND SAGES—THE FOUNTS OF INSPIRATION HOMAGE TO A TRADITION

—S.N. PANDITA

*In Chair, Prof. B.B Dhar, Members in the audience. I have contributed two papers to the proceedings of this seminar. One is a profile on Pandit Reshi Pir and 'on Sri Rupa Bhawani, which I am told will be included in the future publication of the seminar deliberations. I hope they are also circulated now amongst all of you here. As the papers are structured to a normal format for print, it would thence be unnecessary to present them here again in a similar form.

. Instead I take this opportunity to share with you, my few perceptions on the theme of this seminar that bears a homage to tradition of our very culture and way of life by remembering and recalling the lives of spirituality of saints and seers who have guided Kashmir's cultural life and even sometimes influenced our very individual lives. Whatever I have attempted to profile in my papers about Reshi Pir and Rupa Bhawani, I am inclined to believe, will find a general acceptance. I have based these on legend, facts and history and yet there may be exception of my critics who may not subscribe to what I have written about these saints. But there is one aspect to which there can be no dissent and that is the message our saints and seers give to the very conduct of our distinct cultural life and the world society as such. Be it Lal Ded, Reshi Pir, Bhagwan Gopinath, Rupa Bhawani or else any other evolved soul of spirituality, from the earliest times Kashmir has been land of saints and seers of sublime order who developed in themselves occult powers of greatest variety and influence despite the ;lapse of centuries since they lived they still command public homage and devotion. This seminar is one such homage.

Distance of place has undoubted a great charm but distance to time has greater and when it is associated with the memory of a pious soul this charm is immensely enhanced. A saintly soul's account of life is always appreciated by those in whom tradition is not dead, by many in whom ancient learning and the veneration of ancestors are the breath of life. And so truly Kashmiri Pandits uphold these traditions and beliefs. Therefore the purpose and importance of this seminar calls for no elaboration.

The influence of serene meditative minds of the saints and anecdotes of their occult power have dominated the minds of Kashmiri people and it is on account of such tradition in our society that Kashmir has perpetually tended to renovate mankind towards peace and harmony. Our saints have also tended to temper our materialistic outlook on life and grafted a fine philanthropy upon the philosophy of our faith as a community.

Saints are apostles with super human energy and they remind us of the Creator and His grace. As founts of inspiration their deeds strike in us the cords of devotional feelings and nobler sentiments and that is how, Kashmiri Pandits trace their ancestors to Gods. Lives of our sages have become a thrilling song of our cultural identity. Their pure lives lead us to appreciation of higher values and are a contribution to the ideas of the glory of world heritage.

The ages, it has been truly said, are mirrored in their old songs and sayings. In this age of chaos and conflict when spiritual rebirth of mankind alone can bail it out from the predicament of the present times remembering saints is a matter of reassurance. In this age which is also characterised by an insatiable thirst for higher knowledge, there cannot be an object of more intense desire than to gaze upon the matchless and eloquent form of antiquity than recalling the inspirational lives of our sages and saints.

The philosophical and poetical works of these geniuses of every age and clime and their hidden treasures should therefore be recovered and made accessible to all. They are among the most venerable characters of our moral antiquity and also the heroes and heroines of ancient popular religious culture in Kashmir. The precious sayings, the production of their divine inspirations have rooted themselves in our minds and are resounding and vibrating many toned within us. Their lives reign in them both power and fullness of genius. They penetrate more deeply than ordinary mortals into the mysteries of theology. The minds of saints and seers could well be compared to a mirror in whose depths is reflected the history of humanity. They lash vice and extol virtue and their sayings and message of deeds are animated ad inflamed with the most chaste metaphors whose conception and composition are very beautiful, sweet and sublime conveying vivid moral truths that can never be read without internal emotion. Their unique effusions of real inspiration soothe the ear, mend and melt the heart and elevate the mind.

The cultural expression of the ancients serve no doubt as a living link between the present and the past and bring one into contact with philosophy at a deeper level. There is therefore, a greater need to know and appreciate these expressions after sifting them as corn is sifted in a cripple.

Kashmir has been a fairyland of peace and contentment wrapt round the devotional silence of the Himalayas. One hopes that the tragic happenings of terror and turmoil of recent times are only an aberration to our great cultural legacy.

Our attempt by recalling the tradition of this great heritage is timely and apt I believe the world will rise in homage to our legacy that our society has produced men as well as women in the past who enriched mankind by their deepest thoughts and loftiest philosophy. In short they are a gift immeasurably precious to the world and to all nations and Kashmiris must indeed be proud of this tradition.

This indeed is time that like our bygone generations through whom these traditions have descended to us are scrupulously preserved with historical accuracy and passed on to our future generation to carry the baton. Our collective deliberations in today's proceedings is a meaningful attempt and also a befitting manner to pay our homage to a great tradition.

(Address by the learned speaker at the Seminar)*

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T.N. Dhar is a renowned poet of Kashmiri language. He writes under the pen name 'Kundan'. He has authored a number of books including two volumes of his Hindi poems, Understanding Education, A Portrait of Indian Culture, A Window on Kashmir, Philosophy of a Common Man, Bhagavad Gita, the Elixir of Life. He was the Editor of the English section of the 'Koshur Samachar'—a trilingual journal for about five years and is now the Consulting Editor of two prestigious Journals. His poems are included in the anthologies published by the Sahitya Academy and the Kashmir Academy of Languages, Art & Culture. He is the recipient of Pt. Prem Nath Bhatt memorial Amateur Journalists Award for the year 2000.

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